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“To Whom the Goddess . . .”



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LADY APSLEY



LADY DIANA SHEDDEN

“To Whom the Goddess . . .”

*Hunting and Riding
for Women*

by

LADY DIANA SHEDDEN

&

LADY APSLEY

*Illustrated by photographs of some of
the foremost horsewomen of to-day and
drawings by Lady Diana Shedden
and with an Introduction by*

THE EARL OF LONSDALE

THIRD IMPRESSION

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In fact, an ancient story hath it that the gods delight in this business both as followers and spectators of the Chase. Therefore . . . the young who do what I exhort them to do will put themselves in the way of being dear to the gods and pious men, conscious that one or other of the gods is watching their deeds. These will be good to parents, good to the whole city, and to every one of their friends and fellow-citizens. For all men who have loved hunting have been good ; and not men only, but those women also *to whom the goddess*¹ has given this blessing, Atalanta and Procris, and others like them.

XENOPHON, *On Hunting*, 347 B.C.

¹ Artemis, the goddess of Hunting, the Roman Diana.

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P r e f a c e

IN adding to Books on Riding we feel some apology is necessary. But in spite of adverse times it seems that more new people are coming out hunting, bringing with them fresh zest, making books on Hunting and Horsemanship in greater request than ever, whereas, singularly, in spite of the fact that many more than half these are women, nothing seems to have been written lately entirely from their point of view. At a popular Meet in almost any country the onlooker is struck by the female incongruities that present themselves. Watching the crowd outside the first covert one is appalled at the so-called "ladies' hunters." Directly hounds find, one can see that few of their owners are riding as well as they might, that much needless damage is done through ignorance, and that the Science of Hunting the Fox is not understood. In a good hunt the star performers of the female sex may be counted on the fingers of one hand. Much of this is unnecessary. It is a mistake to think that good riders are always born and not made. Of course, it is an advantage to start young, but there is no doubt that many women by taking thought and a little trouble could improve their riding, and so their pleasure, out hunting. We feel it is mostly a question of not knowing. Many are content with themselves, but to the many who are coming on, new to the venture, and anxious to get the best of the finest Sport in the world, we offer this little book of notes in the hope that it may save some few of our younger and newer hunting sisters from the expensive proceedings known as "buying experience" and "profiting by mistakes." At the same time, we humbly record our admiration of the magnificent horsewomen, Past and Present,

upon whose example and practice most of what follows is based.

We desire to acknowledge our deep appreciation of the many kindnesses we have received in the way of help, suggestions, and photographs, especially the following: the Dowager Duchess of Beaufort, Honble. Mrs. Aubrey Hastings, Lady Blanche Douglas, Mrs. Maurice Kingscote, Captain Lindesay Shedden, Lord Apsley, Lieutenant-Colonel Brinton, the Duke of Westminster, and Mr. Dennis Moss, as well as the various ladies who, after many applications, have allowed us to reproduce their photographs.

DIANA SHEDDEN

VIOLA APSLEY

BADMINTON,
May, 1932

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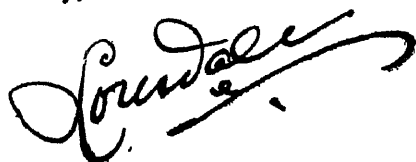
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I n t r o d u c t i o n

IT is with the greatest pleasure and interest that I have read this book: "To Whom the Goddess," and I can with the greatest confidence congratulate the authoresses on a very remarkable, interesting, and instructive work, that must have caused them a great deal of research and gives evidence of very wide experience and knowledge. It is most interesting, and goes into every detail and department of the Chase and all appertaining thereto. I can certainly recommend the public—or such of them as are interested in sport—to read the book, for it is interesting from every point of view, and charmingly written. I make no comments, but I sincerely congratulate Lady Diana Shedden and Lady Apsley on their work and having achieved so wonderful a collection of information. There are no two people more qualified to write on such a subject than the authoresses, they having been brought up from childhood amongst everything connected with horses and hunting. I therefore wish them, and their readers, all the best of luck.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lord Dunsany", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

“TO WHOM THE GODDESS...”

CHAPTER I

DIANA DOWN THE AGES

“Mythology makes Artemis or Diana the daughter of Latona, but she is the child of running water, the deep shades of woods and the mysteries of solitude. All chaste elements of nature, all purities of soul have the Dorian goddess for their symbol. Sister of Phœbus . . . she is the Moon. Tall and slim and exquisite, she tops by a head the wandering troupe of nymphs . . . her hips narrow like a boy’s, her long legs suggest the swift runner. Image of activity, of physical and spiritual strength, she is the glory of the forests. She is invoked in sickness, for it is in the forest that all purifying and healing essences are locked away in the secret caskets of the herbs. She offers to the tired body and weary mind the balsamic fragrance of the woods for their refreshing . . . she is vigour, health, poise in serenity.”

(*Moon Mistress*, JEHANNE D’ORLIAC.)

THE cult of Diana the Huntress has never been an easy one and to-day as always down the ages she demands a stern novitiate. The quick eye, instant action, keen judgment, a trained mind and body are as necessary to those who would excel in the Chase now as they were in the glades of Arcadie.

Over the entrance to the Delphic Oracle were graven in gold “Know Thyself,” a pointer to knowledge. Most books of Hunting and Horsemanship begin with theories and the way to mount a horse—we would go much further back and counsel our novices before questioning Oracles to Know Themselves at least a few of the points of the Chase in which they would indulge, and some of the facts relating to the Art of Riding which accompanies it. Before adopting any theory blindly, know all there is to know about it. In this way comes Judgment that leads to true Knowledge. We would counsel every devotee to go seek the goddess for herself—

we, among the most humble of her altar-cleaners, can merely point the way.

In this book we do not propose to explain the Science of Fox-hunting, as so many abler pens than ours have done so, but we would like to offer a few suggestions to the young hunting women of this generation, which, if not already realized by them, will add considerably to their enjoyment of a day with hounds.

To begin at the beginning, how few women out hunting realize the great antiquity of the Chase and the connection therewith of the female sex. The cult of Diana is lost in the mist of time, but it is no new thing for women to love hunting. To us nowadays "Hunting" generally means the relatively new sport of fox-hunting. Love of the Chase is much older than the written history of Womenkind. It is a deeply ingrained feminine instinct which has been applied all down the ages to the getting of husbands (an art with which this book is not directly concerned) as well as to the chasing of smaller game. It has ever been a convenient custom of mere man to pretend that women's place is entirely in the home. The world to-day, however, is apt to challenge convenient customs as such, and to apply to them scientific research as to origins and beliefs. If we analyse the undoubted appeal that hunting has for many women of the present day we discover good reasons why they should react so strongly to the lure of hounds and horn, even in this sophisticated twentieth century, so delighting in comfort and security and so disliking of pain and cruelty. Non-hunting people marvel that leisured women who could spend their time in what journalists call "luxurious ease," prefer instead to gallop about the country getting tired, muddy, soaked to the skin, and sometimes badly hurt, all for the sake of a small red animal who would otherwise be deservedly extinct in the English countryside. Reasons may not be far to seek. Sometimes the instinct to hunt is bred in the bone, on both sides of the family, and with most such hunting is likely to be the main object of life; while in others it may have been dormant for generations and, as with inherited

repressions given an opportunity, it bubbles over with redoubled vigour.

The hunting instinct traces back to the days of the mammoth and the sabre-toothed tiger, when prehistoric Man, tiring of a diet of shellfish and vegetables, disputed with his ferocious contemporaries the hunting grounds of Europe, the men fighting with stone-tipped spears for very existence, while the women sought the family supper, hunting the smaller animals, fishing and trapping. In fact, we can still see the North Australian aborigines exactly as our Stone Age ancestors lived. The men are the warriors and protectors of the tribe, but it is the women who take the greater part in hunting for food, pouncing on a fat lizard, whipping the head off a poisonous snake, running down kangaroos in the open, flinging a stone at a bird on the wing or standing for hours in the water to spear a fish.

The basis of all real sport is this primitive instinct for obtaining food. And no sport is worthy of the name that cannot in some measure be traced back to this primitive necessity for chasing a wild animal in its native haunts, incurring woodcraft, long initiation, toil, patience, courage and quickness of mind and soundness of body—a failure in any one of which may mean disaster, shame, or even death. Judged by these standards, Fox-hunting remains one of the finest sports in the world, as these qualities are as necessary in 1932 to the fox-hunter of both sexes as they were to the poor cave-man and woman, literally chasing the wolf from the door while they hunted small animals for food and clothing. This aspect must never be forgotten. It is particularly strong among the fair Nordic races of Europe, to which, of course, English people belong in varying degrees. Other so-called “sports” may exist for a time in England, but unless they conform to this instinct they wither away after a short trial, or are suppressed by outraged public opinion, as was the case with bear-baiting, cock-fighting, and other so-called “sports” which at various times have been temporarily popular with some Englishmen. Possibly for this reason the excitements

of the bull ring and gladiatorial shows of any kind, so beloved by the races of Southern Europe, have never appealed to the sporting instincts of the British public, while field sports—the chasing of a wild animal in its native haunt, either for food or for fur, or by reason of its being vermin and destructive of crops or game—has been the favourite amusement of leisured Englishmen for generations. One has only got to attend a Bank Holiday Meet in almost any hunting district in England to see how deeply the instinct to hunt is ingrained in all classes. The trouble is that they have not the full knowledge of the Chase, and to enjoy hunting it is essential to know a good deal about it. In fact, the more one knows about the sport the more does one enjoy it.

Typically English sport has no definite origin or date, it has simply grown up with Englishmen, influenced again and again like everything else English by people and ideas from abroad.

The origins of English sport as of the English language are difficult to find. It may seem a long point from food-hunting in the Stone Age to fox-catching in 1932, but with the good hounds, Tradition, History, Literature, and Art we can hunt the foiled line down the ages with very few checks. Art has ever represented people's best acts and aspirations. It is significant that the earliest known painting (on walls of a pre-dynastic tomb in Egypt) represents people hunting (Breasted, *A History of Egypt*). All the early peoples were fond of hunting, and the sources of ancient history have many references to women and sport. The cult of Artemis or Diana the Huntress was one of the highest forms of pagan religion, and running with hounds on foot was considered a fit occupation for the finest Greek maidens. Hounds are often referred to in Homer, but hunting in Ancient Greece appears to have been a form of beagling, the idea being to chase a hare on foot into nets laid skilfully for the purpose, the hounds not being expected to kill, wild boar being hunted in the same way into nets, and then speared by men on horses.

Early Pharaohs chased the ibex, the gazelle, the hare, and

even the porcupine along the banks of the Upper Nile, driving after the quarry in gilded chariots, and according to the picture writers were often accompanied by delightful lady friends. The Persians were great hunters, Herodotus complaining that King Cyrus of Persia gave the revenue of four great towns to meet the expenses of his hunting quarters, but it is doubtful whether ladies of his court took any part other than listening to tales of the Chase—tales which have bored non-hunting wives and daughters all down the ages ! The Mongols took their wives with them on hunting trips ; so did Emperors of China. The Kings of Assyria maintained magnificent game preserves called “ paradises,” in which they hunted on horseback.

Biblical references to “ mighty hunters ” are many, but there are too many references to “ net, traps, pitfalls, and snares ” for our liking, and there is no evidence that either a horse or a hound was used by the Jews for hunting, at any rate, before the time of Herod.

Doubtless the people of Britain shared the habits of other Celtic people, so that Queen Boadicea, who could drive scythe-wheeled chariots against Roman legions, must have chased wild beasts with her hounds. Contemporary Roman writers state that the sports clothes worn by the British women became the rage of fashionable Rome, because they were both practical and showed the figure to advantage ! The Romans as a nation were not particularly keen on hunting, but dependent on swift transport, they were great horse-breeders, and probably to them we owe the first improvement in the native ponies they found in all parts of Europe, Africa, and Asia.

“ Bye, Baby Bunting,
Daddy’s gone a-hunting ”

was probably first crooned over the cradles of those fair-haired “ Barbarians ” who swept like their Valkyrie over Europe among the ruins of the Roman Empire, bringing with them fresh virility and an ardent love of the Chase, which remains with their descendants to the present day.

The Gauls coursed for the sport and not to live by what they caught. In the vast forests of the Ardennes the cult of Diana (she who had caused so much trouble to St. Paul at Ephesus) lasted for centuries after the Christianization of the rest of France, and for long afterwards the Festival of St. Hubert, the patron Saint of Hunters, as kept in mediæval France on November 3rd, echoed the old orgies to Diana the Huntress.

From early times Germanic peoples enjoyed great "batues," or the driving of huge herds of game of all sorts into enclosures, where they could be killed with arrows, sticks, and spears, whereas the Franks preferred to chase the stag with running hounds wheresoever he wished to go—"Hunting par force" they called it. They loved hunting, and the more dangerous the better. Charlemagne is said to have been particularly fond of hunting the now extinct wild cattle, and to have been very proud of the prowess in hunting them shown by one of his stalwart daughters. A monk historian tells how the Emperor took the ambassadors of Harould-al-Raschid out hunting, and the men from the East were so frightened that they bolted when one of these huge beasts charged the Emperor, who missed his aim, with the result that his trousers were badly torn, and he was lucky to be in no worse plight! The courtiers all offered to lend him their nether garments, but Charlemagne laughingly declined, saying he would first show his rents to the fair Hildegarde, herself a great huntress.

Gradually there grew up on the Continent, side by side with Feudalism, the distinction between "Beasts of the Forest" (or *Venerie*), "Beasts of the Chace" (or the field), and "Beasts of Warren" (or the park). Beasts of *Venerie* being the hart and hind (red deer), the hare, wild boar, and wolf. Beasts of the Chace were the buck and doe (fallow), the marten and roe. Beasts once hunted by the King became "Royal," and could not be chased or killed by a subject, gentle or simple, under grievous penalties. (The fox was outside the Law altogether!)

Succeeding waves of invaders brought these Continental hunting practices into England. The Celtic British had retired to Wales and Ireland, but the Saxon kings of England, as well as their subjects, spent much time hunting, so that Asser, the biographer of Alfred the Great, states that "before the Prince was twelve years old he was a most expert and active hunter, and excelled in all branches of that noble art, to which he applied with incessant labour and amazing success." Old chroniclers write how Athelstan levied as tribute from one defeated King of Wales "sharp scented dogs, fit for hunting wild beasts" (which may have been of the old breed of Romano-British hounds). Edward the Confessor "delighted to follow a pack of swift hounds in pursuit of game and to cheer them on with his voice." Hunting was beginning to take shape as we know it, but it remained for William the Conqueror to introduce into England the strict laws and customs which have protected the more harmless wild animals from extinction down the centuries. Hunting people ever since owe a great debt of gratitude to Norman William, who "loved the tall stags as if he had been their father," and instituted close seasons in the breeding time, and those ideas of sportsmanship in the conduct of the Chase which we still maintain in all our English field sports. The sporting side became uppermost: this was "Venerie," or *the first stage of modern hunting*. *Se disportere* means "to enjoy oneself," and more and more hunting became to be looked upon as the preserved amusement of the hard-fighting Norman barons. Only gentlemen rode to hounds; the others ran on foot. In the days of the Norman and early Plantagenet kings the Chase was probably far too rough, arduous, and dangerous a pursuit for women, though here and there great ladies undoubtedly did ride to hounds like men. Many of them (see Plate 2) went marvellous distances on horseback, considering the state of Europe and the roads, but pillion saddle behind a man was the popular method of transport for women for many a day.

The Crusades resulted in the spread of fresh ideas on

Hunting. Kings and knights took their hounds and hawks as a matter of course (and some few their wives) with them to the Holy Land. Mounted Englishmen with English-bred hounds hunted jackal on the slopes of Palestine during intervals of the Crusades, as they were to do again eight hundred years later in the lemon groves round Jaffa during lulls in the Palestine Campaign of the Great War.

For instance, our "Tally-ho!" may likely come from a Provençal corruption of the Syriac "Tal eh ya"—"yonder he goes!", still used to-day by Arab sheikhs hunting their hawks and saluki hounds. "Tahou," "Tahillaud," was used in Bourbon France only when the quarry had broken covert, and was accompanied with marvellous sounding "mots" on the bugle-shaped hunting horns. There was a cry of "Hallihi" or "hoo-hoo-loo" at the mort which some authorities are inclined to think comes from "La ullah, illah Allah" (the Moslem incantation). "Tally-ho" was not in general use throughout England till late seventeenth century, and probably it was first introduced during Stuart reigns from France where it had been in use since crusading days to distinguish when hunting the red, fallow, or roe deer. Our "Loo-loo-loo" at the death and characteristic notes on the horn are also probably reminiscent of the Saracen customs introduced by the Bourbon *valets de chien* in the reign of James I (see page 28).

HOUNDS. There were several distinct breeds of hounds used in mediæval France, England, and Spain.

The French "running hounds" had both cry and nose, and in most of the old pictures appear to have been rough coated and more after the type of present-day Welsh hounds. (Indeed it is known that the monks of Margam Abbey, Glamorgan, imported hounds from France, and it is possible that these crossed with the native breeds helped to evolve some of the present rough-coated Welshmen.) The old hounds were of all colours, white being much esteemed and sometimes referred to as "of Barberie" (therefore presumably coming from the East via Moorish Spain). The black hounds of



RIDING ASTRIDE IN THE EARLY FIFTEENTH CENTURY
The Empress Helena entering Jerusalem (from a predella of Michele da Matteo).

PLATE 3



Jean Goujon, *Fontaine*

*Diane de Poitiers, Duchesse de Valentinois (1499-1566), as Diana the Huntress ;
equally famous for her love of hunting and her charm.*

St. Hubert's Monastery were famous for their nose and voice and undoubtedly were the progenitors of the modern blood-hounds. Lord Bathurst, a great authority on the origin and breeding of foxhounds, believes that the English hound certainly came to these shores very early from the East and refers to the tradition mentioned by old chroniclers that "running hounds" were introduced into Britain from Greece (*The Breeding of Foxhounds*, Earl Bathurst).

Strabo mentions that there was a very good strain of hound in Britain in the earliest times, one reason for Julius Cæsar's first foray into Kent being "to obtain dogs, horses, and skins." Pure white hounds were in England, Scotland, and Ireland by tradition and legend at the dawn of history, and in the old sporting pictures English foxhounds appear invariably smooth coated and with a lot of white about them. The word greyhound may be derived from "greg," the Celtic for dog.

The second stage of hunting, as we know it, was marked in the early fourteenth century when the golden-haired Gaston de Foix wrote his *Livre de Chasse*¹ (1387), which became the textbook on hunting in France and thence was copied throughout Europe.

The English translation, called *The Master of Game*, is the oldest book on hunting in the English language. It was made by Edward, Duke of York, who fought at Agincourt.

The chief characteristic of mediæval hunting seems to have been that men knew more about the "nature" of their quarry than most of us do now. They loved wild life with a keenness unblunted by intellectual recreations—they enjoyed the play of the sun's rays in the forest foliage as well as the deep tones of their favourite hounds: they enjoyed the woodcraft leading to the kill, which had to be done in a "knightly way," not with cross-bow or long-bow, but with cold steel,

¹ The contemporary illustrated copy of this book now in the Louvre is one of the most beautiful art treasures of all time. It was formerly in the possession of the father of Diane de Poitiers, like her a great lover of hunting. One of the most perfect Knights of Chivalry, Gaston de Foix had six hundred hounds, including Tristran, Hector, Brun, and Roland, brought for him from England by Froissart the Chronicler. (FROISSART.)

requiring judgment, nerve, and coolness whether on foot or on horseback. (The killing was not delegated to a subordinate till at a later date the use of gunpowder removed the risks.)

But in those days the Chase was a leisurely if arduous proceeding. First the beast was "harboured," or his feeding-ground watched over-night, and his lair reported to the Lord at "the Mete," by the Chief Verderer or huntsman, to which, generally after a good meal, the company sallied forth. Then the "lym" hounds (or "tufters," as present-day stag-hunters call them) were laid on to "rout" him out and separate him from the others, which often took a long time, till cries of "Hunt's up" and the horns of the hunters proclaimed gone-away, the "lymers" were stopped and the "running hounds" laid on, sometimes all together and sometimes in relays. The most important time, when the stag or boar stood at bay was the most important time, and the chief gentleman present had the honour and danger of despatching the beast before a critical audience.

Art flourished in Europe during the long creative period known as the Renaissance and all the great patrons of that period seem to have spent their leisure hunting and to have commissioned the portrayal of their skill in the hunting-field. We can still admire the tapestries made for Margaret of Anjou on her marriage with Henry VI (in the Victoria and Albert Museum, now the property of the Duke of Devonshire) and the perfect detail of the contemporary hunting scenes depicted. The great Dürer drew animals and birds in the prayer book of his sport-loving patron, the Emperor Maximilian (1459-1519), with the eye of an artist and naturalist. Velasquez's equestrian portraits now at the Prado Museum, Madrid, of Margaret of Austria and Isabella of Bourbon are among the most famous pictures in the world. One does not need to be keen on hunting to appreciate the perfection of the magnificent set of "Belle Chasse" tapestries, among the priceless possessions of the Louvre. These were designed by Bernard von Orlay, the pupil of Raphael, for Margaret Regent of the Netherlands in memory of her father the Emperor Maximilian

who so loved hounds and hunting and sport of all kinds, and her mother Mary of Burgundy, "Mary of the Joyous Spirit" as she was called, who was killed by a fall out hunting. Margaret of the Netherlands was a *grande chasseur* herself who "could undo a boar, or brittle a stag with her own hands." She required that her ladies-in-waiting before entering her service should show their horsemanship by mounting unaided!

Letters of that period are full of references to hunting, such as how Galeazzo Sforza travelled across Italy with five hundred couple of hounds of all sorts. (No wonder the journey cost him 200,000 golden ducats!) All this had its repercussions in the relatively small and unimportant England, but of all European countries France under the Bourbon kings probably influenced our hunting customs the most. The Bourbon kings loved hunting exceedingly. J. de Fouilloux¹ tells how once Louis XI was offered a certain white hound, but preferring his own "perfect dunne hounds" (i.e. dun-coloured) did not much esteem the gift; whereupon the Seneschal of Normandy, also a keen hunting man, begged the King to give "the white hound from Barberie to the wisest ladie in his realm." The King enquired who that might be. "Your daughter, the Princess Anne of Bourbon," replied the courtier. "Pish," answered King Louis testily, "I do not agree that she is the wisest, there are few wise women in the world, you may call her the less foolish than others." Anyhow the hound was given to the Princess who "loved hunting exceedingly," and she so appreciated "the beauty and goodness of this dogge" that she crossed him with her own "dunne hounds" (which were dun-coloured, small, and with a white ring round their necks) and thus started a famous pack which Francis I later still further improved by using a fallow dog and a white dog, the gift of the Queen of Scots. This blood was later imported into England by successive Stuart kings. Beatrice d'Este loved hunting and rode in her best clothes and covered with jewellery. François I was mad about

¹ *Veneria*.

dedicated to Charles IX of France (1500-1574). It depicts a gentleman accompanied by a girl in a cart drawn by a stout cob led by a man carrying digging tools. The cart is full of nets and hung round with wine bottles—evidently the writer despises fox-hunting as merely a digging operation, and



THE EARLIEST KNOWN PICTURE OF FOX-HUNTING, WHEN THE SPORT WAS A DIGGING AFFAIR AND THE PELT THE OBJECT OF THE CHASE

Note the tools and tenners, also the wine bottles for the sustenance of the tired gentleman and his female companion.

Woodcut in *Venerie*, by J. de Fouilloux. 16th century.

naïvely counsels the hunter to take plenty of cold food, ham, tongues, and wine, and if it appears a lengthy operation likely to last over night, a female companion. (This book was translated into English, but needless to say the drawing and this bit were left out by the English translator (George Turberville) in the same way that the typically French jokes are always left out by modern translators of French plays! There

is not much difference between the Englishman of 1576 and 1932 !)

There were two great influences in the development of fox-hunting as we know it to-day.

(1) The Improvement in Horse-Breeding. The history of English horse-breeding is a fascinating study beyond the scope of this chapter. Suffice to say that the modern light horse is an almost completely artificial breed and without him there could be no hunting such as we know it.

The various breeds of ponies and horses in Europe gradually improved throughout the centuries, chiefly by more careful selection and feeding, and by occasional crosses with imported Moorish strains.

There were many kinds of riding horses in Europe in the Middle Ages ; we hear of "the Turk, the Barb, Sardinian, Neapolitan, the jennet of Spain, the Hungarian, the High Almanie, the Friezeland horse, the Flanders mare, and the Irish 'hobbie.'" (Blundervill, *Four Chiefest Offices of Horse-manship*.) They all had their different uses. The Knights of Chivalry rode as large and heavy horses as they could find, probably somewhat like the present Clydesdale : Joan of Arc is pictured as riding a horse of the modern Percheron type. Later when war-horses were required to be quicker for turning from cross-bows and gun shots, smaller, faster horses were popular which came from Spain (probably by crossing with Moorish sires). This type of sturdy, well-bred little animal can be seen in many of Velasquez's pictures. Charles I is riding one on the beautiful statue at the top of Whitehall, and in words Shakespeare, himself a true lover of hunting, a good horse and a hound, thus described the perfect horse of his day :

"Round hoof'd, short jointed, fetlocks shag and long,
Broad breast, full eye, small head and nostril wide,
High crest, short ears, straight legs and passing strong :
Thun mane, thick tail, broad buttock, tender hide :
Look, what a horse should have he did not lack,
So did this horse excel a common one
In shape, in carriage, colour, pace and bone."

(*Venus and Adonis*).¹

¹ See Plate 4.

Riding was treated as a necessary part of the education of a gentleman. Hours were spent in the "manege" teaching a horse to "bound" and to "passage," or as Blundervill puts it quaintly, "to go forward with his fore parts and his hinder parts in equal motions, of great use in the Warres and of so much delight in the place of pleasure," but it was not till the eighteenth century that M. d'Yauville, Grand Veneur to Louis XV, wrote that "the art of Horsemanship is the first thing necessary for a hunting man to acquire." (He also mentions "hacqueenes d'Espagne" and "hobins d'Irelande" as the best hunters.)

Changes in the character of the English country-side ushered in the *fourth stage of hunting* as we know it. As England became more enclosed and cultivated in the great land-owning days, so stag-hunting and falconry declined, chiefly owing to the new conditions—the disappearance of rough country and vast forestal tracts which the deer frequented, and the better draining of the marsh lands which drove the herons and bustards to country impracticable for riding over. Englishmen, "new rich" and old families alike, craved for field sports and gradually, through the Georgian reigns, fox-hunting developed from being merely a vermin-killing business carried on by the humbler landowners to a scientific art and the most popular pastime of the nobility, gentry, and yeomanry of England. Many of the stag-hunting customs and traditions were easily transferred to fox-hunting, likewise probably many packs of hounds were entered to fox instead of to deer and the hare. Who exactly was the first M.F.H. in England is as unlikely to be discovered as is who was the inventor of the first wheel, but it is certain that some time before 1750 Lord Arundel hunted a pack of foxhounds in Hampshire and Wiltshire. These hounds remained in Lord Arundel's family till they were sold to Mr. Hugo Meynell in 1782. The late Duke of Beaufort (the 9th Duke), himself one of the leading figures in connection with hunting of the last generation, calls Mr. Meynell "the real father of the modern English Chase." (*Badminton Library*, volume on *Hunting*.)



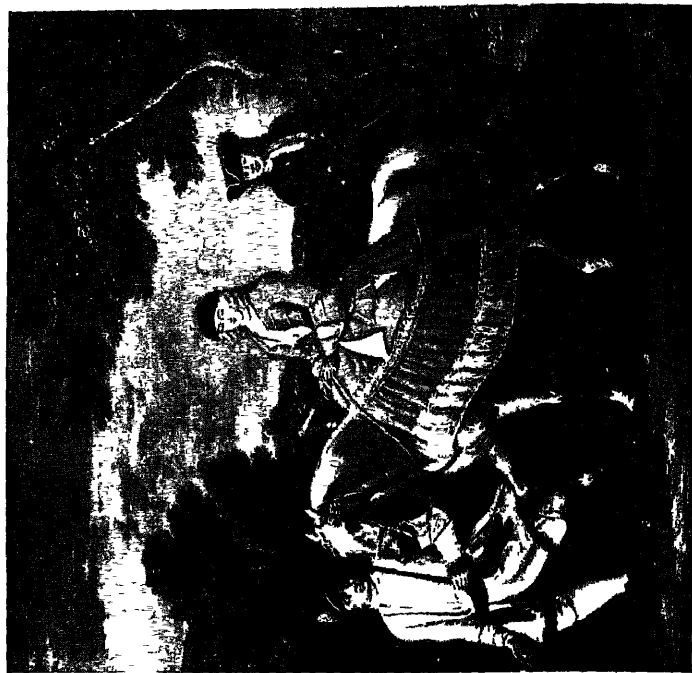
Musee du Prado, Madrid

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY SIDE-SADDLE

Isabella de Bourbon, wife of Philip IV of Spain (from the portrait by Velasquez)



By gracious permission of His Majesty the King
Seventeenth Century
Anne of Denmark, wife of James I, with her beagles at Hampton Court



By kind permission of His Grace the Duke of Portland
Eighteenth Century
The Countess of Oxford (1691-1756), by J. H. Atton, who hunted her own pack of harriers and is here shown with her groom and footman

There is a tradition that one day in 1762 the 5th Duke of Beaufort, failing to find a stag, got on the line of a fox in Silk Wood and enjoyed great sport, thereafter declaring he would never hunt anything else.

Nearly all the great noblemen kept their own private packs and hunted at their own expense the country surrounding their own land and property, thence gradually extending over that of their friends and humbler neighbours. Of course, there were no subscriptions till much more recent times, and all the local people interested were welcomed, provided that they respected the old traditions of the Chase and the authority of the M.F.H. To this day there remains amid fashionable democracy no power so arbitrary as that of the Field Master. It is nearly the last remnant of feudal England, and yet how wisely and justly the authority is usually wielded !

The influence of the old French customs ordained that clothes should be smart and gay, and the tradition was handed on to fox-hunting. Nothing but best clothes was good enough. The great landowners used to turn out very correctly with all their servants in their own family livery, and their colours are still in use among many of the older established Hunts. The Berkeley hunt-servants still wear the tawny yellow livery of their founder, likewise do the Old Berkeley and the North Cotswold show their ancient connection with Berkeley Castle in their yellow collars. The hunt-servants of the Duke of Beaufort's wear the green coats, which have come down from stag-hunting days (green being the old stag-hunting colour), while members of the Hunt wear the coveted "blue and buff," the livery of the Duke, only at his personal request. Most of the old Hunts in England have a history, with which people resplendent in their new "buttons" should make themselves familiar, as it will add enormously to their interest in the country and the hounds.

The golden age of the Belvoir Foxhounds started during the minority of the 5th Duke of Rutland, who succeeded his father in 1787, and the "Belvoir tan" became synonymous for all that was good and beautiful in a foxhound, rather to the

detriment of many of the less fashionable, good hunting strains, the pure white and old "badger pied" hounds, which we see in old sporting pictures. Enormous distances were covered in those great days of fox-hunting. For instance, Badminton Hounds hunted from Tedworth to the far side of the Heythrop country (which is the reason that to this day the Heythrop hunt-servant's uniform is green). Lord Berkeley hunted at his own expense 120 miles of country between London and Bristol, necessitating in those days four different kennels; he often ran foxes to ground in Kensington Gardens, Kensington being then a hamlet on the outskirts of London.

Fox-hunting started in America about the same time, and was equally popular. George Washington hunted his own pack of foxhounds, imported from England. He and other founders of American culture were typical English fox-hunting country gentlemen—kind, cultured, God-fearing, upright and loyal, intensely disliking interference of the Government in the personal liberty of the subject, and supremely happy in a day's hunting snatched from affairs of State.

British fox-hunting squires and their sons proved their worth in the Peninsular War. Many times has England owed much to her young officers trained in the hunting-field, and to the fact that the passion of her leisured classes has been for hunting rather than for luxurious, soft, unhealthy pursuits.

No one seems to know how red coats and white breeches first came into general use to distinguish the fox-hunter. Charles II's Royal Falconers were red-coated (A. Bryant, *Charles II*). The custom is certainly based on the French tradition of turning out smartly to hunt, anything less than traditional costume being still referred to as "rat-catcher." Probably as the number of people hunting increased, it became necessary to distinguish the proper fox-hunter as such. Farmers and tenants did not mind their landlord and his friends riding over their fields and jumping their fences (the Law then as now permitting hounds *in chase* and their necessary attendants to cross anyone's land, but forbidding followers to do so without due permission), while they

strongly resented strangers. Wellington's officers on active service in the Peninsula kept a pack of hounds, and to the amazement of Napoleon's army occasionally pursued their fox into the French lines ! The Duke himself being one of the keenest. "Those were the days that startled Portuguese on lonely hill-sides beheld an unprecedented cavalcade, heard view-hollers and the sharp note of hounds, and marvelled at the strange proceedings of their incomprehensible allies" (P. Guedalla, *The Duke*).

Possibly many of these ex-officers returning home continued to wear their red coats while hunting with their home packs. Hunting had ever been technically a Royal Sport, red was the Royal colour, and possibly the return of Wellington's heroes, and the admiration they excited among the fair sex, helped to fix for always the uniform for the qualified member of the Hunt.

Great Britain had now become the centre of the light horse-breeding of the world, the prices paid for good hunters increasing the supply of horses for all purposes.

We know that at all stages of hunting in England certain women took part, and that many women had their own packs of hounds, probably chiefly for hunting the hare (see Plate 5). A Royal mandate of Henry III addressed to a certain Richard de Montfichet, Chief Forester of the County of Essex, commands him to "let the Reverend and Pious Ladye Mabel de Boxham," Abbess of Barking, "have her dogs to chase hares and foxes," so that a woman M.F.H. is no new thing !

But the first authentic woman M.F.H. was probably the Countess of Salisbury, who kept a pack of dwarf foxhounds at Hatfield (1777-1812), and used to go a-hunting in great state, her servants magnificent in sky-blue livery, black collars and lapels, and black velvet caps. She rode to hounds very hard, and at her death her pack formed the beginning of the present Hertfordshire kennels. There were few lady followers in the early days of fox-hunting, possibly because it entailed very early rising and a long hard day spent slowly working up to a fox.

In a diary kept by Juliana Ludford of Ansley Hall, Warwickshire, there are many accounts of the runs with Lord Donegall's, Mr. Kinnersley's and Lord Belfast's Hounds (1774-1794). For instance :

"In Oct. 1777 I went from Fisherwick Hall with Lord Donegall in his postchaise a fox-hunting. The hounds met at Polesworth, where we got on horseback, and after waiting some time for the fog to clear, went and drew the woods on the common and Bagley Woods, where we found a fox and ran him away to Birch Coppice, and from thence towards Polesworth, then back again thro' Birch Coppice where he went to ground. Ld. D. and myself were thrown out for a considerable while and rode I suppose at least three times round the hounds after the fox went to ground . . . we saw one of the whippers-in who had been to Atherstone for the terriers who told us where the hounds were and we then went to them and found them digging for the fox which at length they dug out and killed by the hounds. Timothy brought home a foot. We then went home to Atherstone with the hounds, dined there and then went back to Fisherwick."

All this has a modern flavour ! but practically the whole delight of the early fox-hunters was in hound work ; thus that Grand Old Man of fox-hunting, Peter Beckford, did not consider it a good day " unless the fox had stood up before hounds for at least four hours."

One hundred and thirty years ago there was little to jump except occasional boundary ditches, fences, and palings—the majority of our familiar walls and cut-and-laid fences being barely more than a hundred years old. Indeed, the old records show that Mr. Meynell was aghast when the young bloods of his later days started galloping to hounds on blood horses and careering over the new fences and walls which many honest folk had thought would be the doom of hunting. They found out it was fun ; Lord Cardigan of Balaclava fame and other hard-riding " Kings of the Hunting-field " made fox-hunting popular among a new rising class of rich people, who knew nothing of the old niceties of the Chase. In desperation

Masters of Hounds in fashionable countries bred faster and faster hounds, trusting to run down their fox in the open. This produced the *fifth and modern stage of Fox-hunting*. Instead of being an extremely rare animal with every man's hand against him, the fox suddenly found himself pampered and spoilt, with coverts especially planted for him and actually "preserved"! Shades of the old Grand Veneurs! But the spirit of the Chase still went on, and withstood yet another shock when the Railway Age seared ghastly steel roads right through the heart of the English country-side, bidding fair to kill sport for ever.

At first early Victorians looked on the women who hunted as not "quite nice," but gradually it was admitted that the finest feminine qualities were not debased by fox-hunting; though for a long time women who rode to hounds, as distinct from women who rode out to the Meet and about in company of a groom, were rare. Lady Wilton lived at Melton to see many of her sex all over the British Isles as good performers as herself. Possibly the fact of the unhappy Empress of Austria taking a hunting-box and regularly hunting with the famous "Bay" Middleton as "pilot," gave hunting for women just that *cachet* of respectability most required to set anything going in Victorian times!

Perhaps the greatest change of all that concerned women lies in the difference in the style of hats, habits, etc., during the last sixty-five years. For instance, Mrs. Poulett Somerset (daughter of the famous Jack Mytton, M.F.H.), one of the hardest women to hounds in her day, always went hunting wearing a large brown straw hat with drooping ostrich feather and flowing veil! And Lady Geraldine Somerset and many others always wore white embroidery-trimmed petticoats under their full and sweeping habit skirts with button boots and trousers! These long skirts were fearfully dangerous till they were made of a light material which easily tore away if the wearer chanced to get hung up in the pummels. The safety apron habit at length took away the worst nightmare of the hunting-field, breeches and better saddles did the

rest. The more complete emancipation of the twentieth century gave women opportunities in the hunting-field which they have not been slow to seize, and well-bred hunters, controlled by skill and sympathy rather than by brute force, puts them practically on an equality with man.

One more serious blow threatened hunting as we know it. The Great War burst on the country-side—hunting men answered their Country's call, on land and sea and in the air, their graves lie close in the farthest theatres of war, together with the good hunters they loved so well. Their women-kind closed up the ranks behind, and it is largely owing to the efforts of sisters, wives, and mothers that hounds were saved and hunting "carried on" somehow in war-time England, faced with famine and air raid, death and universal disaster.

To-day we find hunting as we know it confronted with a fresh set of difficulties the like of which we are apt to think has never been met before, but we forget that Pestilence, Floods, Wars, Starvation, Black Death, Civil Strife, Industrial Revolution, etc., at their times must have seemed as catastrophic as present-day conditions.

We now face bad times, the elimination of the old great landowning and yeoman families, the agricultural depression, the spread of bungaloid towns into the country, the enhanced value of poultry (always pedigree now when taken by a fox), the menace of wire, the agitation of Anti-Blood Sports people, the huge costs of everything—these are some of the many difficulties which confront those who are trying so well to uphold the great traditions of the Past. The Chase still lives as bright and strong and as health-giving as it was in the time of Diana the Huntress—though times change we must each of us who hunt to-day see to it that the old traditions of courage, loyalty, and clean sport are handed down to face the new conditions in the Old Spirit, as has happened in the past.

One thing emerges plainly that hunting people all down the ages have never been dolts or loons, but among the greatest men and women leaders of their day, who learned courage and gained inspiration from the Chase, and what the golden-

haired Gaston de Foix wrote in 1387 is just as true to-day :
“I never saw a man that loved the work and pleasure of
hounds and hawks that had not many good qualities in him ;
for that cometh to him of great nobleness and gentleness of
heart of whatever estate the man may be, whether he be a great
lord or a little one, or a poor man or a rich one.” (*Livre de
Chasse.*)

CHAPTER II

THE ART OF THE MODERN HORSEWOMAN

“Men at some time are Masters of their Fates :
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.”

(*Julius Cæsar*, Act i, Sc. 2.)

IN the last chapter we outlined the story of hunting down the ages to modern times in order to show how much we owe to Tradition. Perhaps the greatest differences between a fox-hunter of our day and his equivalent in old times are : firstly, that the ordinary member of the field takes no part in the hunt, and is merely a spectator ; and secondly, that in order to see hounds at all in these days of small enclosures, it is essential to be well mounted on a horse that is able to gallop and to jump all sorts of obstacles, at slow pace or fast, and to stop and turn, and to go easily and stay whether up hill or down dale. The old Grand Veneurs would have been aghast at the idea of two or three hundred people trying to see a hunt ! In modern hunting the horse plays a much more important part than he ever did before, and a considerable amount of the pleasure and safety of a day's sport depends on the capabilities of the mount and the degree of control the rider has over him. Anything, therefore, that tends to improve one's riding nowadays certainly adds to one's enjoyment hunting, just as the modern professional huntsman, who is also a good horseman, generally shows such good sport as he is the better able to practise his art.

In this book we do not attempt to teach riding in the preliminary stages, but we would like to help some young or inexperienced riders (1) how to make the most of their opportunities, to get greater pleasure out of riding ; (2) to give them ideas to think out for themselves ; (3) to point them the way to enjoy a day's hunting to the full ; and (4) to save them from possible ridicule.

Next to knowing something about the sport itself the main essential in order to get *the best* out of hunting is that every member of a modern field must be able to keep within sight of hounds; therein lies the art of modern fox-hunting. Riding the horse becomes therefore of paramount importance.

The first thing is to appreciate the difference between the simple act of "riding" and the much more difficult art of "horsemanship." It is a comparatively easy matter to be a rider; it is difficult to become a *horseman*. Many people regard the terms as synonymous and remain novices all their lives. But even the derivations of the two words explain the subtle distinction: "ride" coming from Anglo-Saxon "rad" (the same root word as road), meaning "to be conveyed on a smoothed place." In this way a ship "rides" at anchor in a roadstead, one rides in a train on the railroad or in a car along the roadway; and when one "rides a horse," strictly speaking, "one is a rider conveyed by a horse on the smoothed way" (which, as a matter of fact, is literal truth of a great many equestrians, both male and female!). Whereas "horseman" is a composite word, meaning "man-*and*-horse together making one whole," which is neither a "horse man," nor a "horse'd man," but two separate entities compounded in harmony so that you cannot tell where one begins or the other leaves off.

In other words, "riding" is merely the physical act of maintaining contact with the horse, an exercise in which one may gain proficiency with ease, either by (1) considerable practice or (2) a suitably staid animal to ride. Whereas to a horseman the physical act of sitting on the horse's back is only one of the many components which go towards the making of the partnership. It is a pity the two terms are so loosely used. To be a good rider, one that can keep contact with his mount under *all* circumstances and stick in the saddle whatever his horse may try to do, necessarily implies considerable muscular strength, but the real artist has something more. Though a strong seat is necessary to a first-rate horsewoman, few women are hefty enough to compete with a high-

couraged, fit, blood horse up to fifteen stone, riding by physical strength alone; but granted a small knowledge of the Art of Horsemanship, physical disabilities can be overcome to a large extent or even become an advantage. There are many men, insignificant on their feet, artists in the saddle through their consummate horsemanship, and the average woman, being so many times weaker than a man, has even greater reason to acquire horsemanship—unless she is content to remain in the second class, i.e. "A rider conveyed by a staid horse on smooth ways." Perfect partnership between horse and rider, whether a man or woman, is a beautiful sight, and there are few experiences in life which are more worth while taking a little trouble to attain. It is very nice to be "strong on a horse," but it is not vital to horsemanship.

Many novices are under the impression that the more they ride the better they will ride. This is not always so. Granted that constant riding is one essential to proficiency, yet without practice in the other equally important components of horsemanship, true proficiency will never be achieved. Some people who have ridden all their lives still remain novices.

It is often asked—Can a woman with no previous experience hope to ride well? The answer is—Yes, provided that her teaching is carefully arranged in progressive stages, and that her confidence is never allowed to be shaken. It is so largely a question of individual temperament; a determined woman can accomplish much. There are many women hunting to-day, enjoying themselves and going really well, who did not get on a horse till after the thirties. The main essential is to start with an experienced teacher, preferably a professional, and a suitable horse for a grown-up pupil to ride. It is criminal, as some husbands are apt to do with the best intentions in the world, to put a nervous wife, a complete beginner, on a high-couraged blood hunter, and leave her to teach herself in a crowded hunting-field. The inevitable results being that she misses a start, gets mixed up with refusers and funkies, which upsets her horse, she rides over seeds or wheat in the effort to catch up, loses hounds, and gets thoroughly

tired and upset herself,—even if she does not have a quite unnecessary fall. Many “nerves” have been unnecessarily ruined thus. Another mistake is to let a beginner’s or really nervous woman’s hunter have any corn (or at most a handful or two a day). If there is a sign of the horse being “fresh” it is wisest to send it out before breakfast for a canter before she gets on. A “poor” horse can always be made up, but lost nerve is regained slowly if at all.

The complete novice requires lots of school work in riding before going hunting, and then a careful pilot once or twice at least, before going across country by herself. The best thing a keen novice can then do to help herself improve, provided she is well mounted, is to attach herself with or without permission to some good experienced member of the Hunt, and without following too close on top of the chosen pilot, watch very carefully all he or she does and attempt to do likewise. More is learnt out hunting by keeping the eyes open and watching what is going on, and being quick and alert, than by any other method. A useful way to improve one’s horsemanship is to work out the analysis of a good horsewoman as below, and to carefully apply it to oneself, concentrating on obtaining an equal measure of perfection in each component. A good horsewoman must be complete “all round”; for instance, “good hands,” though one of the two essential foundations will not be found sufficient without the equally necessary subdivisions: Resolution, Power of Anticipation, Habit of Balance, etc. etc.

It is all really surprisingly easy, as the old definition of Genius as an infinite capacity for taking pains is equally applicable to the Art of Horsemanship.

ANALYSIS OF A GOOD HORSEWOMAN

1. Understanding	}	=A. Hands	}	=Horsemanship.		
2. Harmony						
3. Anticipation						
4. Confidence						
5. Grip	}	=B. Firm Seat				
6. Balance						
7. Correct Use of the Aids						
8. Resolution						

It can be readily seen that Anticipation and Resolution are the only *inherent* qualities (if such, indeed, they can be called at all) which are necessary to a horsewoman—and together make only a quarter of the finished horsewoman—the remaining three-quarters of the whole being *acquirable* through work and practice.

Many people transpose B and 6, or A and 8, or rely on A and 5—this is wrong, anyhow for the average woman.

There are two primary foundations to Horsemanship on which every novice who aspires to becoming a horsewoman in the best sense of the word must carefully build. (We write, of course, to those ordinary folk who have to learn by experience and by profiting from disaster, not to those geniuses, spoiled children of fortune, call them what you will, to whom everything in life comes easy, being "born in them!" without trouble or toil, from fairy godmothers.) These two essentials, seen above, are :

(A) HANDS.

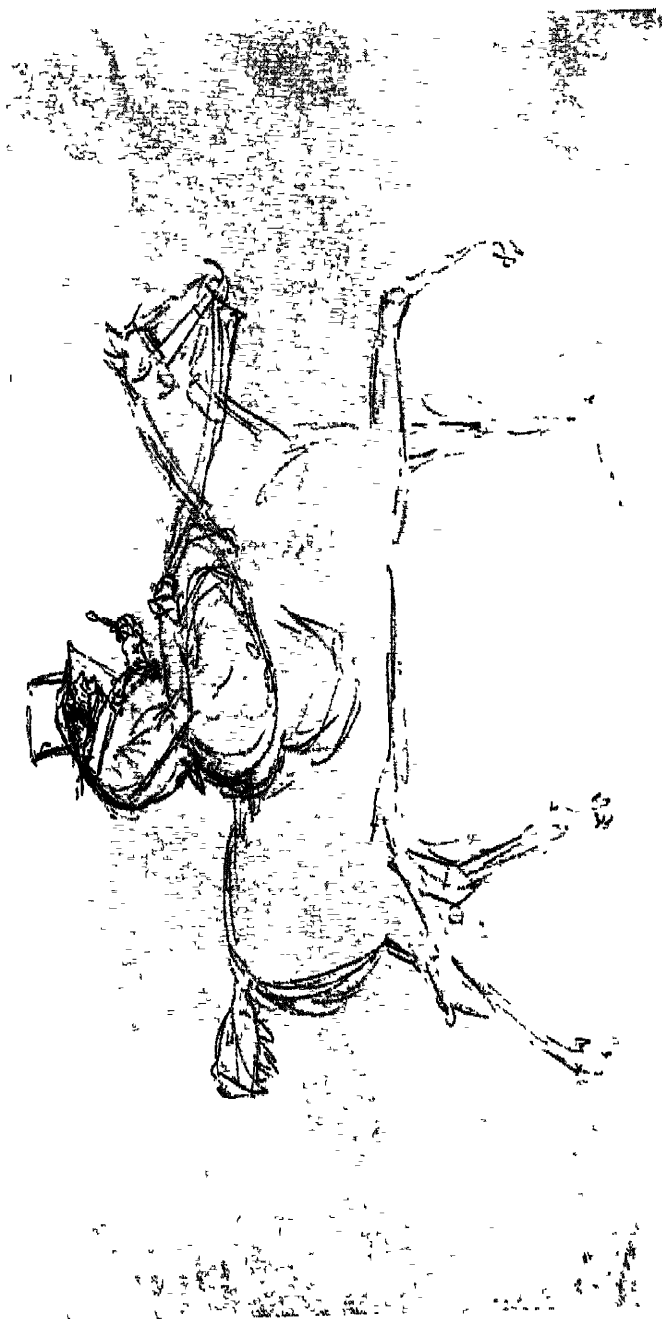
(B) A FIRM SEAT.

They are of equal importance, and to a large extent interdependent, but without acquiring them both to at least a minor degree, most of the pleasure in riding or hunting a good horse is missed.

A. HANDS

"Hands" is an expression invented years ago by indifferent horsemen to describe the power with which some people rode horses—a something that could never be explained, or defined, or taught, being therefore classed as magic, incomprehensible and probably "born in you." Admittedly there are inherited instincts in all of us, but in these days of scientific exactitude and the analytical mind questioning old shibboleths, one has come to doubt whether "hands" can be a mysterious quality, granted to some and denied to others. Rather it seems that "hands" are at bottom simply "sympathy between horse and rider," and that so far as any spiritual quality such as sympathy is attainable by any effort of ours, so is the inestimable gift of "hands"—this subtle connection, sensitive

PLATE 6



12 Salisbury - "Old Salisbury" -

*From a drawing in the possession of Countess Bathurst
The Countess of Salisbury, the first authentic woman M F H, kept a pack of foxhounds at Hatfield from 1775
till her seventieth year, in 1819*

PLATE 7



Photo W A Rouch

The Hon Mrs Fred Cripps (on "Goldmine"), one of the finest horsewomen across country.

telepathy which permits one person to ride with ease horses that to others are impossible—attainable by each of us, who has eyes to see and ears to hear. Sympathy means fellow-feeling, and this is what a rider with “hands” has and his antithesis has not. “Hands” aid one to know what, and why, and how a horse is feeling, and this is the master key to successful Horsemanship.

Unless a person is really fond of horses he will never get the best out of them. They differ but they are all alike. One must study one’s horse : see things from his point of view : give and take. The only way to show a horse one doesn’t like something is to hurt him in different degrees : the way to show him that one likes what he is doing is to make him happy and easy. If a thoughtless rider hurts his horse by jobbing his mouth, spurring his sides, hitting him, pinching his back, etc., even unintentionally, his mount becomes upset, undecided, and irritated and, like a human in similar circumstances, cannot give of his best. The rider blames the horse and the horse blames the rider : the latter is unable to make his point in words, but the rider does not enjoy himself !

The horse must be studied as a species and as an individual. A horse is a most sensitive machine. Properly cared for and treated he will seldom let you down, but fail to treat him right he cannot give you of his best and it is useless to punish him. Thus you must feel how impossible it is to expect a well-bred horse, suffering from a side-saddle chafe, to stand quietly at covert side and how useless it is to job him in the mouth. Given a certain set of circumstances he will respond in a certain way partly through inherited instinct, partly by training, and partly on his own initiative. If the same set of circumstances occurs again he will almost certainly act in the same way again and quicker, and so on, till the habit is completely acquired. Memory is his strongest characteristic next to inherited instincts, and habit his most easily acquired attainment, which makes it so necessary to get a horse to do the right thing by force of habit from his earliest days.

HANDS, then, depend on (1) UNDERSTANDING the *Psychology*

of *the Horse*—the study of his mind, or what Colonel G. Brooke calls "horse sense."

Two thousand years ago Xenophon counselled the young Greeks studying Horsemanship "to strive to *understand* the horses they would master." To-day, Colonel Geoffrey Brooke writes, "the real lover of horses is a student of equine psychology and the more knowledge a man possesses the better he rides, the less his sport will cost him and the more pleasure he will derive from horses."

So many good young horses are ruined for life in ways that could be avoided by a little horse sense. By this one does not at all mean that horses should be pampered and spoilt and treated as super-humans. It is silly to send hunters five miles to the Meet in a motor horse-box, and one does not infer that it is cruel to do a day's hunting on one horse. In fact the rich man's stud is more likely to damage itself than the poor man's, and overfed, luxurious hunters are apt to damage themselves as well as their owners. A horse overfed on oats is really like an intoxicated person—neither are fit to look where they are going! Horse sense holds the happy balance.

A horse may not reason as we know it, but his small brain relative to his size is compensated for by a most retentive memory, and the good horsemaster must never forget this characteristic of horse sense—as the good teacher studies the psychology of each of his pupils and sees things from their point of view, so in the same way it is essential for someone who wants to get the best out of a horse to get into that horse's mind and see things as he sees them as well as feeling as he feels.

Women's horsemanship is often a game of make-believe—humouring, nursing, petting, fussing, give and take, call it what you will—to make up what they lack in muscular strength.

For physical reasons the majority of women must avoid a tussle with a strong horse. Some may endeavour to "kid" him into thinking he is doing what he wants to, but it is not much use the *average woman* trying to "kid" her horse in this way

as if he is at all inclined to be nappy or refuse with her he will soon get much worse and probably unrideable for her. It is far better to put a good horseman on him as soon as possible to put him straight before bad ways have become chronic habits than for his owner to continue avoiding a tussle. The one time a good horsewoman can "kid" a horse is if he is difficult to hold with an "if you pull at me I'll pull at you all the more" kind of mouth; she "kids" him into thinking she can hold him, but it's a great art! If it comes to a tussle with a horse or a pony, remember you must win or else part with him. He will never forget and your prestige and influence will be gone for ever.

Many novices make the mistake of endowing horses with a human mind, but with the exception of some dogs, animals have not a highly developed reasonable mind depending on nerves and imagination such as humans have. Practically the only way to approach an animal's mind is through its senses. Appreciation of physical comfort, appetite for food, and memory are the strongest senses in the horse. Much can be taught a young horse by the reward of a titbit, like sugar, or a carrot. Patience and kindness, as with all animals, is essential in dealing with horses. Remember that willingness to please is an inherited instinct which is due to careful selection in breeding, and against which must be set the far older instinct of self-preservation—safety in swift flight being the only defence of the palæolithic horse. Breeding has also given him courage and strength, but civilization, as with humans, has introduced to the horse highly strung nerves, and a temperament to a varying degree.

Lastly, the rider must always remember how his horse's memory is composed of a fund of personal recollections superimposed on these ingrained and inherited instincts, which must receive due allowance in dealing with a refractory animal. Suppose you are hacking and your horse stops short and refuses to go on. Is anything the matter? Is it because he connects this spot with something unpleasant? Have you done anything to upset his temper, is it a sign of overfed

exuberance of spirit, a touch of horse-play or some deep-seated devilment handed down from a cross-grained mare or a bad-tempered stallion? In arriving at the truth you will be the better prepared to deal with the situation. For instance, you would not use your nastiest cutting whip on a dear old hunter merely testing his rider's determination to continue a boring hack over the dinner-hour, nor would you waste time humouring a cunning son of Satan looking for the trouble that must come his way quickly, but fairly.

Woe betide anyone who kindles in his horse memories of insecure seats, jobs in the mouth, irritation to highly strung nerves; such an one had better choose something less well-bred, thicker skinned, duller in intellect than a hunter.

(2) HARMONY between horse and rider is an essential corollary after an insight into equine psychology. The true horsewoman adjusts herself to the temperament of her mount with a view to getting the best out of him. She senses if he is sluggish and wants exciting, if he is nervous and requires soothing, if he is comfortable both inside and out, if he is excitable and needs quiet handling, if he is going to "play up" or whether his buck was due to natural high spirits. The fine horsewoman immediately sets up a subtle companionship with her horse directly she gets on him. As the French poet wrote of human frailties: "*Tout savoir, c'est tout comprendre; tout comprendre, c'est tout pardonner.*"

Gentleness and patience are the essence of harmonious dealings with horses. It is fatal to lose one's temper; a horse never forgets. If you punish him outrageously solely to give vent to your feelings, he is surprised, bewildered, misunderstands, fears, then despises you; he loses confidence in you, and so you will never get the best out of him. A well-bred hunter is by virtue of his breeding probably highly sensitive and excitable, yet by reason of a small brain endowed with few facilities of self-control, so that you may get more out of him by playing up to his humour than by constant inhibitions. Quietness at all times is essential in dealing with all kinds of horses.

The practical means of establishing harmony between horse and rider is through the hands on the reins, and if the rider is in harmony with her horse by having already established a good understanding he will be in a state of mind ready to fall in with her views, satisfied he will not be hurt, or frightened. A light touch will do. A great jockey, asked the secret of his wonderful hands, said he used his reins as if they were bits of silk and would break at the first pull. It is right to "maintain contact," to "feel" your horse at all times—which neither means that you must hold him tightly by the head, nor that you should let him slop along with flapping reins, but it is safe to say that the essence of harmony between a keen, bold, well-bred horse and its rider is a measure of "give and take." Provided one has a fairly firm seat this is easy, but with a loose seat the rider is apt to hang on by the reins, unintentionally jobbing her horse in the mouth whenever anything unforeseen happens or she loses her balance even ever so slightly.

(3) ANTICIPATION is required by the aspirant to Horsemanship. Relying so instinctively on speed and cursed at times with unaccountable vision, a horse acts with surprising speed; his rider's reactions must be equally prompt. The best way is to *cultivate a sense of looking ahead*, of preparedness for whatever betides. *Be ready*—which does not mean that you need to get yourself into a state of expecting trouble all the time! A "nervous rider" is one constantly anticipating things that do not happen, and often infecting her horse with her own nerves. But had one been quick to see the cock pheasant flying up out of the hedge, half a second before the four-year-old did, the upsetting half-shy, half-buck would have been anticipated, the humiliating fall averted, by being ready!

One notices with all good horsemen particularly how quick they are, quick to notice a little thing, quick to get on, quick to get off, quick to think, quick to act. *Quickness* is largely a habit of mind and, like all habits, it can be acquired. Half the folk out hunting are slower than need be to get a move on, slow to hear hounds leave covert, slow to start galloping, slow to see hounds check, slow to get to a gap, slow to see the

place to jump. They lack anticipation—they are not ready ! It is certain that in the hunting-field, as with all the worthwhile things of life, to get near the front rank one's wits must be alert, alive, and jolly quick ! It is sickening to see a young man *slowly* getting off his horse to open a wired-up gate, or a young girl left at the start—"Oh, I didn't know they had gone !" It may be unfashionable to show yourself keen and enthusiastic, but if you start bored with horses and hunting you will end—on the floor !

B. A FIRM SEAT

There is a certain amount of confusion in the term a "firm seat"; by "firm" we intend one in contradistinction to the seat that is loose and depends on the reins and stirrups. A "strong seat" would imply muscular strength as already explained, and the expression a "good seat" more suggests a nice-looking, graceful type of figure sitting in the saddle to best advantage.

To ride, whether side or astride, a FIRM seat is absolutely necessary, because without it "hands" can hardly be used at all. The choice of seat adopted is according to inclination or experience, but until that seat can be retained with comfort and certainty the rider has no claims to Horsemanship.

(4) The first requisite towards a firm seat is CONFIDENCE in yourself based on certain knowledge. If you don't know how to do something yourself you will not be able to make your horse do it. There is such a deal to know about Horsemanship and Hunting. Never think you know everything. Some people are casual and careless and only muddle along with everything they attempt : these seldom get the best out of life. Without being too fussy and tiresome about it, one can pick up useful information in a variety of ways. Personal experience is best gained by riding different horses, but books, conversation with other people, grooms, vets, farmers—all have something to teach the keen horsewoman. Nobody, except possibly a few of the best M.F.H.'s, know "all about hunting" and it is the same with horses and riding. Remember

also that opinions differ; and, what is often forgotten, that there are sometimes two ways of attaining the same end. There are age-old controversies on methods and theories. The young horsewoman should strive to understand the theories behind all horse stable management, but she cannot expect to work on theory alone. The novice should beware of her own callow opinion—her confidence must be based on practical knowledge or she will merely be, and look, a fool.

In case a novice does not quite see how knowledge of this kind is going to help, here are two simple examples :

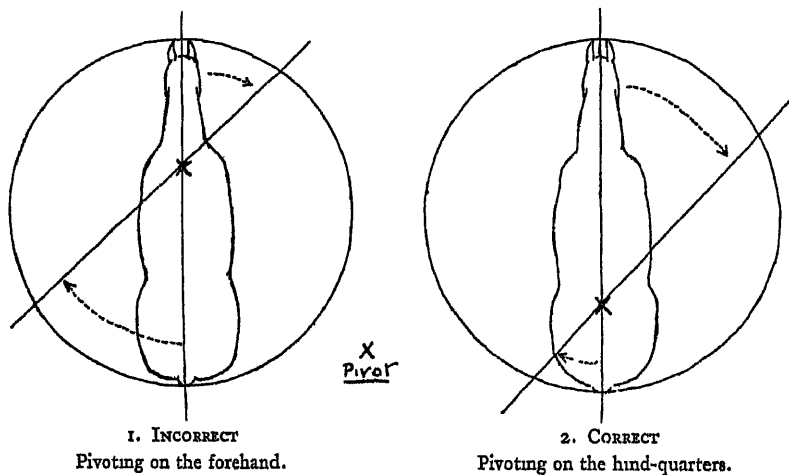
(i) How very ill-adapted a horse is to carrying weight.—Everyone knows that a saddle is put on a horse's back for the purpose of making the rider comfortable. Saddles of one kind or another have been used down the centuries and yet every generation in turn has had to rediscover that horses' backs will be made sore (1) if the saddle is ill-fitting, (2) if it is on too long, (3) if before the back has been hardened, (4) if the horse is not fit. With X-ray photography, the real reasons for all this have been discovered—how singularly ill-adapted by Nature a horse's back structure is to carry heavy weight, but by suitable exercise, strapping, and feeding, a solid cushion of muscle can be induced for the saddle to rest on without pressing on the weak backbone.

(ii) The reason for clipping hunters.—A horse's natural state is one of thick hair full of wet-resisting grease in order purposely to prevent rapid perspiration, but living an artificial life on stimulating diet especially designed to create energy his skin must be kept free of the grease, dust, and long hair which clog the pores, as perspiration is the only way to aid the system rid itself of the extra poison by clipping and massage (i.e. strapping). But being in this artificial state at a time of year when Nature provides a heavy coat, his blood heat must also be kept up to prevent chills and colds by heat-making foods, exercise to maintain the circulation, and when at rest by warm rugs. Knowledge of all kinds in regard to horses certainly helps to attain the confidence so necessary to a horse-master.

There are three aids, (1) "Direct," (2) "Lateral," and (3) "Diagonal."

(NOTE.—The voice in theory is an "aid," and at times it can be of great service, for instance, in approaching a horse in the stables, at grass, and in soothing him, and as a word of command. The human voice, particularly that of a valued friend, has great power with the horse, but in practice, at any rate, in the hunting-field and in the show ring among a lot of other riders, it is not possible to use the voice to a marked degree as an aid.)

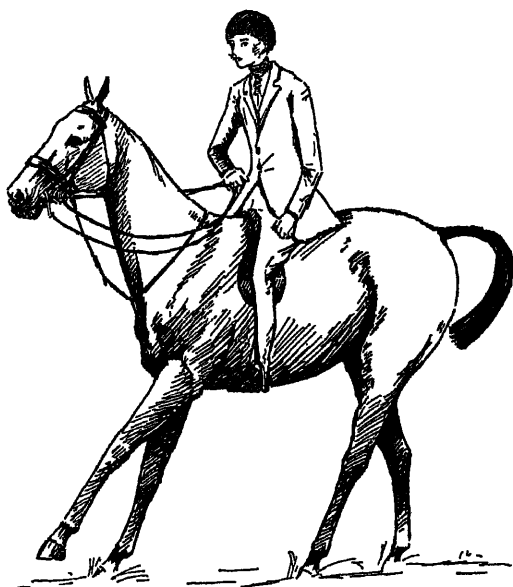
(1) The Direct Aid is the position of hands and legs which convey to the horse in the simplest way that you want him to



TURNING TO THE OFF

turn in the way most natural to him, i.e. "on the forehand,"—which means using his fore-legs as a stationary pivot for his hind-legs to circle round. For instance, if you touch the RIGHT rein at the same time giving a kick with the RIGHT heel the average horse will turn right, by keeping his fore-legs still and moving his hind-legs away in a half-circle to the left; i.e. pivoting with his weight on his FOREHAND. This is a simple but clumsy way of turning, using hand and leg on the same directional side, but it is sometimes useful for getting a horse up to a gate or alongside another horse.

The correct way to teach a horse to turn is by using (2) the Lateral Aid, opposite hand and leg. Thus : for turning to the left, you slightly lower and move left hand to the left, tightening left rein, and leaning that way yourself at the same time pressing the right (i.e. the opposite) leg from the knee backwards behind the girth—thus, as it were, preventing the horse by the pressure of your right leg from turning his hind-quarters at all to the right, so forcing him to turn by moving his FORE-LEGS only and using his HIND-QUARTERS as the pivot.



NECK REINING

In this way he is made to turn balanced and connected instead of sprawling round with his bridle half out of his mouth ! At first a certain amount of firmness will be required in applying and maintaining pressure on a young horse, but with the habit once acquired it is not forgotten. The lightest feel of the rein and pressure of the leg will suffice. Of course, in ordinary riding and hunting one turns more or less on "the centre," rather than entirely "on the hocks," after the fashion of a schooled polo pony. And a hunter taught to "neck-rein," i.e. to turn away from the side on which he feels the reins against his neck, is a very pleasant conveyance for a woman

side-saddle. He immediately turns when given the office properly connected and balanced on his own.

(3) The Diagonal Aids are used for making a horse "passage," or go sideways after the manner of mounted policemen clearing a street. By using the hands and legs alternately, yet smoothly, the horse can be made to move sideways with both forehand and hind-quarters at the same time. It takes skill on the part of both rider and horse, and is the outcome of careful school work, but with patience any horse can be taught, and it undoubtedly improves both his mouth and his general balance, as is proved in constant practice by the cavalry of all nations. It is also an interesting exercise for a young rider.

In applying Leg Aids correct timing is most important. Only by practice and intuition can you learn just the right moment to squeeze your horse to make him turn or change his leading leg. This giving of the signal is a test of horsemanship.

The aids are applied through *the Reins* and *the Legs*: these can be used well or ill, and theory must be joined to correct application.

THE REINS

The reins for a woman's use should not be thin and finicky—which slip through the fingers so easily when wet, but they should not be over heavy, thick, or clumsy, and, above all, they should always be well cleaned and supple to the touch. Suitable types of bridles for a horsewoman are referred to in Chapter III, but it is necessary to understand the theory of bits and bridles so as to use the bit or snaffle to proper advantage, otherwise the aid cannot be correctly applied. It is most essential always to use the reins delicately and sensitively, understanding how the action of the curb tends to lower a horse's head and the bridoon to raise it. A nicely balanced horse can be stopped or extended by the lightest touch on the reins if only you keep his head in the right place.

It does not really matter how you hold your reins in your hands. What matters is how you use them and whether you can shift them from one hand to another quickly and easily, separate them, shorten them, and know all the time instinc-

tively whether you are riding on the curb or the snaffle or both. The usual way people pick up the reins with the left hand is through the fingers from above with the *back* of the hand upside—a better way taught by Lord Lonsdale for riding and hunting a well-made horse is illustrated on Plate 8 in the photograph of Lady Blanche Douglas. The four reins are picked up by the left hand from *beneath*, and held lightly and evenly, each rein separated by a finger—the two curb reins (the bit) on the outsides and the two bridoon reins (the snaffle) in the centre and divided by the second finger. The right hand holds the whip, leaving the second and third fingers free to maintain contact from above with the two right reins. The idea being that in this position the wrists are more lightly flexible, and one eliminates the little finger which is usually neither so strong nor so sensitive as the first three fingers for a delicate and even touch. The ends can be all brought through and held firmly by the thumb and the little finger, according as you desire them to hang—to the off, or the near side. The backs of both hands turn outwards, and the bearing on both sides of the horse's mouth is evenly adjusted and maintained by both hands held level. The hands can be easily separated, or the reins transferred quickly to either hand. (See illustrations on Holding Reins and Opening Gates, Plates 8, 26, 27 and 28.)

For ordinary riding, this position with the two curb reins outside, and a light but even pressure on all four reins, will probably suit most horses; but a very light-mouthed, or rather excitable horse, apt to fight for his head or to resist the curb, can be ridden on the bridoon only, by slightly slacking the curb reins. Putting the snaffle reins to the outside and the two curbs inside make it rather easier if it is at any time necessary to ride with one hand only, applying the curb more firmly to make a horse shorten his stride. This is also probably the better way of holding the reins if there is any risk of jobbing a horse in the mouth while jumping, but it largely depends on what the rider is used to and was taught in the beginning.

In holding reins you must be ready to "give and take." If a horse wants to shake his head a little, or reaches out for more freedom—let him, give to him: you can easily shorten them later.

Hands as such are a heavy instrument. The essence of "good hands" is the flexibility of fingers, wrists, elbows and shoulders—allowing a horse to "play" with his bit, "playing" with it yourself, always in contact, but never with a mechanical control or any sort of "hanging on." Never "niggle" at your horse's mouth, as this is a bad habit to contract. Finger-tips must be sensitive, wrists flexible with elbows and shoulders used as supple shock absorbers.

The good horsewoman is always able to shorten her reins, and to let them slip through her fingers and to change them from one hand to another quietly, quickly, and easily, at no time using them incorrectly or unintentionally—and always using both hands.

In jumping you most certainly need both hands on the reins, and the best way is to divide your reins, with the off reins in the right hand, and near reins in the left (see Plate 30, Miss Musgrave jumping) so as to be better able to present your horse straight at his fence. But keep your hands as close together and as low as possible. There is an old saying: "Divide your reins but not your hands." You will have to be ready to let the reins slide just sufficiently through your fingers when a horse stretches his neck jumping big and to give him his head without losing "the feel." (For rare occasions, see pages 174-5.) The less you interfere with a "made" hunter the better will he perform.

The main idea is at all times to maintain a light feel of your horse's mouth—without interfering with him unnecessarily. Give him as free a head as you can, a nice long rein, and always ride with your hands low. You want your horse to appear to go as nicely as possible on his own. Any form of "hanging on" to a horse's mouth is obviously fatal to that tender, precious communication between horse and rider by deadening the sensitive nerves that lead from the jaw to his brain.

Nature is always merciful to her dumb creatures in pain. She first lets them fight the pain, and if that does not give ease, the hurt part quickly becomes numb : it is the same with a horse's mouth as with a rabbit in a trap. So if you deaden your horse's mouth you cannot expect him to feel your message ; it is just like a wireless with the battery run down—useless to catch that distant control signal. The ideal to aim at is a well-schooled horse going perfectly and easily with a free head and readily obeying the slightest aids. That is perfection, but many of us have to ride something considerably short of perfection—horses that have been badly made, spoilt by someone else, or not a suitable conformation, and sometimes unless we ride such a one we miss a day's hunting. Hiredlings and so forth fall much short of perfection and the good horsewoman is not really first-rate unless she can adapt herself to varying circumstances, make the best of them, and ride all sorts of horses, good, bad, and indifferent, understanding what each is doing and herself riding them all with the grace that conceals art—the true artist on a horse. A horse quickly responds to light hands.

LEGS

By the correct application of the legs you can make your horse lead at the canter with whichever fore-leg you desire. Most men's horses lead with the near fore, but it is smoother and more comfortable side-saddle if your horse has acquired the habit of leading with the off fore. (See Chapter X, "Showing.") The side-saddle rider has the disadvantage of only being able to use one leg, but she should learn to grip sufficiently with her right thigh so as to be able to use her left leg strongly when necessary. The left foot should always be held horizontal alongside the horse's flank and well home in the iron ; it can go forward, heel downwards a bit when the horse is suddenly pulled up, otherwise it should be kept as still as possible. (See illustrations of Side-saddle Rider's Seat, Plate 14.) The old-fashioned side-saddle necessitated sitting well back gripping with the knees, and a short stirrup

which let the left leg up so that many equestriennes of the old days only obtained purchase on their uncomfortable soup-plate saddles by pointing the toe and digging the left heel (and spur!) well into their horses' ribs—result, Aunt Sophia's mount often bolted! When riding astride, the lower part of the legs should also be free and supple enough to apply the aids correctly. The irons should be an easy fit but not too big (which is dangerous), and the feet can be stuck well home and pressing more on the inner sides of the irons as this keeps the knees tight into the saddle, knees pointed forward (as this puts the weight on the thighs), back supple, hands low. (See Chapter IV, "Astride," and photograph of Lady Warrender, Plate 17.)

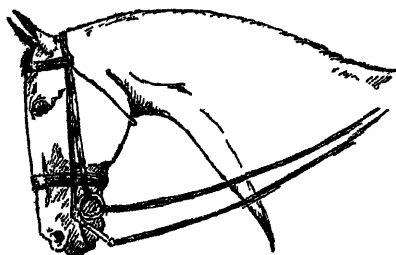
There has always been a controversy about women wearing spurs—some maintaining that they are "cruel, unnecessary, and dangerous." It is entirely a question of how they are used and of individual taste. Leg pressure is admittedly the correct aid, but a spur with blunt rowels, or a dummy, used not in the accepted sense of "to spur on her mount," but because riding moderately long side-saddle, one's foot is some way off the horse, surely is a most convenient appendage to a boot with which to apply the aid? The great thing in a horsewoman is to be able to convey her intentions quickly to a horse and a slight pressure with a blunt rowel is a well-defined aid. (The jobbings in the mouth and clicking noises sometimes given are quite unsuitable "aids" in the hunting-field!) Of course, the legs must ordinarily be in the correct position and the neck of the spur should be short. This also applies astride, but here custom has more definitely decreed that a hunting-boot looks wrong without a neat spur.

A well-schooled hunter only requires a sign which is easily conveyed by finger touch and slight leg pressure. Common sluggish horses are apt to sharpen up knowing there is a spur on either side of them, otherwise as a general use for women one would deprecate the wearing of sharp spurs of any kind. A beginner certainly should not wear spurs. Before giving a

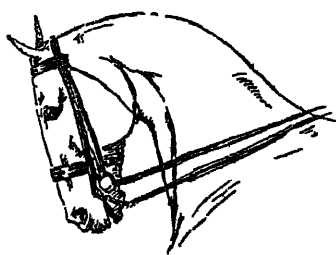
horse any of the "aids," you can give him a warning squeeze to "collect" him. He will then be on the alert and ready to respond immediately.¹

Naturally in the hurly-burly of the hunting-field there is no time to practise school tricks, but anything that improves the balance of one's hunter and the pleasure of riding him adds to his value and his safety out hunting.

Your horse will also be a much pleasanter ride if he has been taught "to bridle"—to bend his neck nicely; in fact, it is impossible to use a double bridle properly without. It is part of the making of a good hack, and the fact of a horse being a good hack adds a great deal to his value as a "lady's



1. Nicely "bent."



2. Over "bent."

hunter." It cannot be taught all at once, but quietly and gently one can get his head into the correct angle and he quickly finds that the position does not hurt and ceases to fight. Do not "nag" a horse all the time, but you will find excellent opportunities for just "finishing" an otherwise perfect hunter. At the same time it should be noted that an *over* "bent" horse may lose his natural elasticity and that some good hunters have not a suitable neck conformation, "bending" tending to make them "go in the wind."

Horses are like husbands: they are the strong silent ones and dearly love to think they have their own way. Let them

¹ The reader will appreciate that it is impossible to apply the correct leg aids from the side-saddle seat on the off side, but a well-schooled horse once taught to turn correctly will do so by habit. That is one reason why side-saddle riders should hack their hunters occasionally cross-saddle, or else put a good man on them now and again.

think so, give way in all the small unnecessary things of life and you will then get yours in the big ones !

(8) RESOLUTION. This is necessary to a good horsewoman. The spineless sort of rider who does not know her own mind, has no idea of her own, or has two minds about everything, invariably communicates her indecisions to her horse, till the pair are a danger to themselves and a nuisance to other people. It is better to make your mind up wrong than to have no mind at all or try to do several things at the same moment.

There is no doubt that the nervous, excitable, or hesitating "shall-I-shan't-I?" sort of rider comes to more grief than the courageous, cool, collected person. The traits of the former are quickly conveyed to his or her horse with disastrous results. Only a cool, collected, determined horse can go across country safely and well, and these characteristics can be almost entirely conveyed to him by his rider. In nine falls out of ten it is the rider to blame (unless the horse is a very green one). Cultivate a clear-cut mind and you will communicate it to your horse.

Remember that "Half the falls out hunting come from putting your horse crookedly at a fence and losing your head when he has made a mistake." (Duchess of Newcastle, 1895.)

Do not be upset because you feel on edge or even frightened outside covert. Self-control is the highest attribute of character. A phlegmatic, nerveless, sleepy person seldom attains in anything requiring nerve, judgment, or skill : but a type with these latter acquirements often has had to exercise immense self-control in order to save giving way to imagination, apprehension, hysteria—call it what you will. Good boxers sometimes find it difficult not to cry from "nerves" before going into the ring, great steeplechase jockeys admit to chattering teeth as they canter down to the post, the finest golfer in the world has been sick with fright, so don't worry if you have your own little qualms on a hunting morning ! But control yourself so that you eat a good breakfast and don't fail to get a good start when hounds go away !¹

¹ "Control Thyself" was the motto of the great hunting Emperor, Maximilian II of Austria (page 26, Chapter I), and it is a good motto for hunting people to-day.

"Nerve" is really innate courage and with which one is born, but "nerves" can be completely controlled by strong will. Stimulants do not help, as in time their efficacy impairs your efficiency. Regular habits, sleep, nourishing food at the proper time make one live to enjoy hunting at seventy! One of the best pick-me-ups after a long hard day's hunting when you get in cold and wet and too late for tea is a glass of hot milk with a dash of whisky or rum. The habit among youngish people of carrying flasks out hunting one strongly discourages, if only for the fact that the flask in your pocket may break a rib if you have a fall.

We have tried to keep this paper analysis of the modern horsewoman as simple as possible.

Those who want to go deeper, which we trust will be everybody, cannot do better than read two great modern authorities—Colonel Geoffrey Brooke in *Horse Sense and Horsemanship*, and Colonel Sydney Goldschmidt in *Bridlewise*—for fuller and more perfect details of reasons how and why. And there may be a few who, excited by theories and old pictures, may care to delve back into the past to study Riding and Horsemanship in the many schools of thought which have attained success in particular spheres of action suited to their times. Sculpture, Painting, and Literature down the ages are full of examples of Horsemanship; from the Ancient Greeks riding on skins without stirrups, using a single curb bridle on their cobby, unshod little horses which we see in marble prancing round the Pantheon frieze, to the long-legged "top sawyers" portrayed by the genius of Leech and Alken. It is interesting to read of the Greeks who appear to have ridden less for pleasure than to keep themselves in training for war, the Romans who rode for business, driving for pleasure and chariot racing, and the Tartans who learned to ride before they could toddle, and cruel and relentless to all except their horses made the most wonderful cavalry of history. Again it is interesting to compare the Knights of the Early Middle Ages who rode with long stirrups on horses chosen for strength and weight in shock action while their opponents

in the Crusades, slim Saracens, riding short on Arab thoroughbreds, showed the clumsy men-at-arms how light horsemen could manœuvre. Then Moorish influence developed the Spanish School of Riding and the light horse painted by Velasquez and described by Shakespeare, till the final stages of the Continental School, valued tricks of the *manège* above all else. In 1929 some horsemen from the old Imperial Spanish School still in Vienna exhibited at Olympia—living exponents of history and intensely interesting to anyone keen on Horsemanship.

The modern English School of Riding evolved on different lines. In eighteenth-century England much travelling was done at a "hand" canter, so that ideas of Horsemanship were evolved to suit—a fairly long stirrup (most comfortable at the canter), light bit, and a suitable horse, i.e. compact, strong, with good shoulders, good hocks, and smooth action (in fact, a useful hunter).

The modern "blood" hunter is the product of the late nineteenth century—a horse suitable to gallop, to jump every sort of obstacle, and ready to give his last ounce. And the horseman in England to-day is the man or woman who has the type of skill to make best use of him in a "quick thing." Gone are the makers of the *haute école*. The Duke of Newcastle's *Treatise on Horsemanship*, in the days of Charles I, would be useless in the making of a young horse for modern conditions, yet all the old schools have a deal to teach us that is intensely interesting to a keen student of Horsemanship.

In conclusion, we cannot do better than quote the present Duchess of Newcastle, who describes the modern horsewoman in 1895 as "one whose horse always goes nicely and kindly, who does not hang on his mouth, who knows how to make him gallop and can ride really well at a fence." And those beginners who do not quite comprehend this chapter, we beg them to read the excellent little book called *Riding*, by Lady Hunloke and Mr. Cecil Aldin (1931).

CHAPTER III

THE IDEAL LADIES' HUNTER : TYPES OF—CONFORMATION —UNSUITABLE—AND BRIDLES

"The real lover of horses is a student of equine psychology and finds in the horse those qualities beloved by man : courage, unselfishness, fidelity—what more does one ask of a friend ?"

(LT.-COL. GEOFFREY BROOKE, *Horse Sense and Horsemanship*.)

WHAT a snare, a delusion, and often literally a "stumbling-block" the animal officially described as a lady's hunter sometimes can be ! How difficult it is to find the perfect example that can be ridden with ease and comfort. A man can often enjoy hunting on a horse that would be torture to a woman side-saddle, while sometimes a woman can ride easily a keen, light-mouthed, highly strung thoroughbred horse that would go stark staring mad in the hands of many men.

Few men, even the best of horsemen themselves, have the gift of being able to choose a horse that will suit a woman—how much less then is it in the power of the average male ? The advertisement of a perfect lady's hunter may materialize into either a well-bred utter weed, or a big, heavy, common brute. This is not the dealer trying to do you down, but is typical of the average man's muddled idea of a suitable hunter for his daughter, spouse, or sweetheart.

A woman should choose her own hunter herself if she possibly can, and she should get as long and as comprehensive a trial as possible before buying him. The most satisfactory way is to see him out hunting, watch him going and then one day try him yourself.

If a woman has not enough confidence in her own judgment to choose a hunter, the next best way is to humbly seek the advice of the best woman to hounds that she knows, who is conversant with the applicant's capabilities and the country

where she is intending to hunt. (This personage will almost certainly try to palm off an unwanted member of her own stud, but if the enquirer is a beginner she should not refuse the deal without a trial, as it is likely that no bad horse will be in this select establishment.)

The best hunter for a beginner or a nervous rider is undoubtedly an oldish horse that has been regularly hunted for some years by a first-rate woman, as it will probably have a good mouth and manners, will certainly jump well, and will have learnt to look after itself and have "a leg to spare" under all conditions. All the novice will have to do is to "stay there" and not jump on hounds!

In choosing a ladies' hunter one should begin by avoiding certain defects that spoil one's pleasure from the outset. A woman depends much more than a man does for her pleasure out hunting on her horse. A man does not tire so easily; nothing can be more tiring than some horses' action, and if one is dead-tired, what pleasure is it to gallop or jump, or, indeed, to stay out hunting at all? Over and over again one has heard women say, "I am so dreadfully tired, I think I'll go home." If one watches one will probably see that their horses never walk, and nothing is more tiring; or maybe they hang on—it is very exhausting; perhaps they will not stand still, which is tiring, and annoying also; maybe they have an uncomfortable trot which makes it purgatory to hound jog for miles on end. Some horses rake at you; or have some annoying little idiosyncrasy that makes all the difference to one's comfort. These may all be first-rate over a country, but their wretched owners, particularly if riding side-saddle, lose half their pleasure out hunting. For lack of means, or wits, to obtain anything better, some may be forced to rest content with such, but no woman who can afford another should keep a horse which she cannot prevent from tiring her. Of course, what tires one woman may suit another. A strong horsewoman with a short back can ride a horse that would be torture to her friend with a long back, and someone with powerful shoulders, or on a different saddle, feels quite comfortable on bigger

horses altogether. Thus it cannot be too strongly emphasized that a woman should begin by choosing a horse that will be a pleasure to ride in her own particular case.

For obvious reasons no woman riding side-saddle or astride should be allowed to own a horse that rears.

After eliminating all animals such as these, whose defects are such as to ruin the prospective purchaser's chance of pleasure, the novice should next be chary of those recommended to her by her "boy friends," who, as already explained, are for the most part unable to grasp the fundamentals of a ladies' hunter. In 1816 Mr. Henry Alken, the artist and author, in his *Beauties and Defects in the Figure of a Horse*, illustrated with fine plates, wrote under one of them, "The Canterer, or Ladies' Horse . . . a pretty showy horse that hath neither speed nor good action." This attitude has remained with us to this day in some quarters! Times having changed and, to a certain degree, levelled up the sexes, we cannot do better than first describe in appearance the perfect hunter for both sexes, the inference being that if a horse isn't built to go he will be unable to do so, and that if one horse *looks* a better hunter than another the odds are, everything else being equal, that he *is* because of his looks being right for his job.

Remember that no two judges have quite the same idea of perfection, but on weak points no good judges should differ.

Our perfect horse may rise before us almost in the words of a very good judge (Major W. E. Lyon).

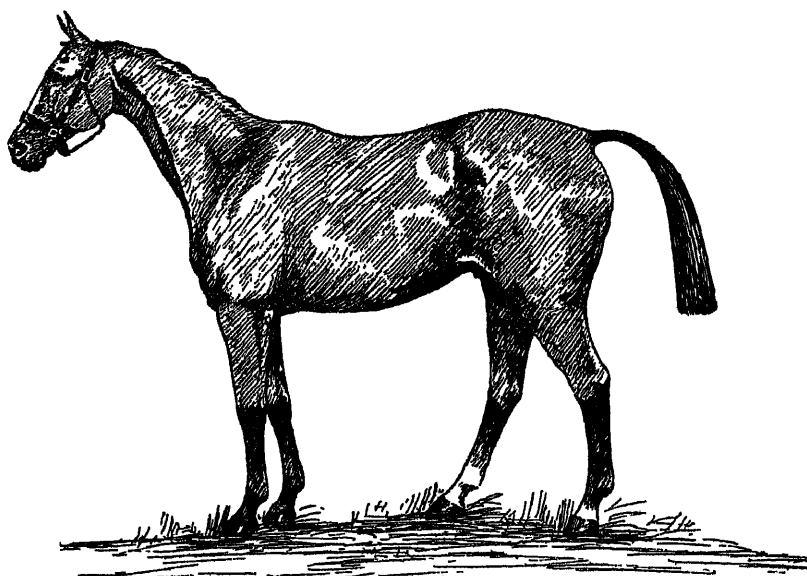
HEAD, well set on with good width between the eyes and the ears. Roomy larynx (you should be able to place your doubled-up fist between his jaws at the join with the neck); the head should fine off at the muzzle; profile straight; eyes open and large; full and clear and showing intelligence; nostrils large and open.

NECK, light at the head, and of long rein, with a firm, muscular crest.

WITHERS, prominent, but not too fleshy.

SHOULDER showing an oblique angle of sixty degrees, going well back at the withers.

FORE-LEG. Arm short, with forearm long compared to cannon bone, and well muscled; point of elbow strong and well clear of the body; knee large, broad, deep, and prominent; cannon bone flat, short and strong, measuring about eight inches in circumference below the knee; back tendons distinct and hard; fetlock clean and well formed with pastern strong and medium length, with a slope of about forty-five degrees. (If too upright there will be more concussion,



Conformation all right.

inviting greater strain to the legs, and if too sloping there is weakness and a risk to the tendons.) Foot of good size and feet to be in pairs. Odd fore-feet are almost invariably a warning of foot trouble in the future (though not in a thoroughbred horse if not *bad* shape). The horn should be sound with good open frog and bars, and with concave sole. In action the heel should touch the ground first.

CHEST should be deep and fairly broad to allow for good heart and lungs.

GIRTH should measure seventy-two inches with ribs well rounded. (A flat-sided horse is seldom a good doer or a stayer, and quickly tires.)

BACK short and strong. (A mare can be longer in the back than a gelding.)

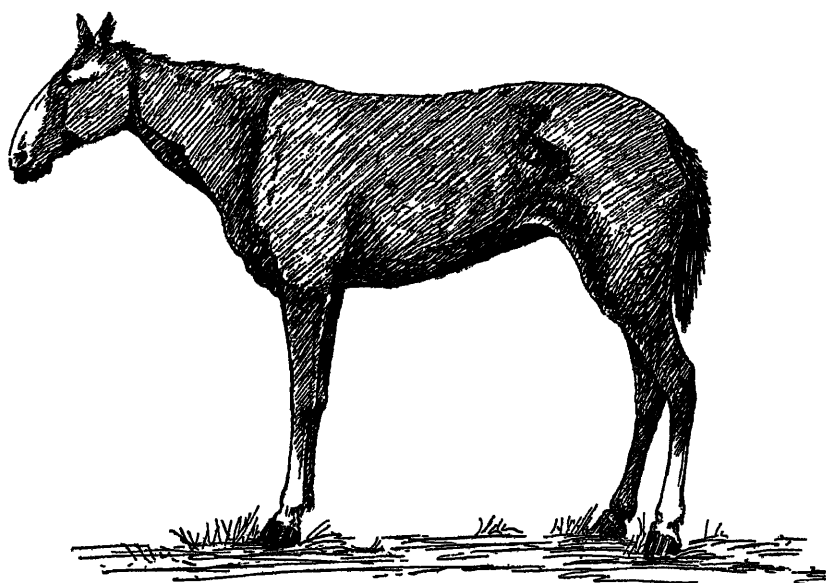
LOINS short and well muscled.

BELLY round-shaped and not tucked up behind.

CROUP long and muscular, with a fair slope to pelvis as a token of jumping power.

TAIL set on high and muscular.

HIND-QUARTERS, long from the hip joint to hock (giving



Conformation all wrong.

promise of good power of propulsion); with strong muscles between the thighs and good second thighs (or gaskin).

HIND-LEG with gaskin well let down into HOCK (which last is the most important joint in the hunter's anatomy). The hock must be clean, prominent, wide, and well "let down"; it should be neither sickle-shaped nor too straight.

The perfect-looking horse must have free action in all his paces, and he will not make a useful hunter unless he has a sound constitution and the right temperament (i.e. good nerves and not over-excitable). He must also be bold, a good doer and a good stayer. Avoid buying a horse very

back of his knees or very straight and upright of his joints and pasterns, as these defects cause such a strain on his tendons.

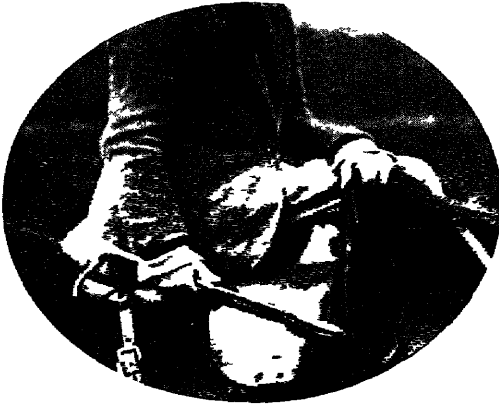
You should not purchase a hunter certified by a vet as suffering from low ring-bones or navicular, whereas most splints, thrush, corns, and some forms of curb are easily curable.

Horses arriving new from dealers' stables should be carefully isolated for fear of a cold or cough developing. Young horses fresh over from Ireland are apt to arrive with a chill and possibly a tiresome skin irruption, known as "Irish pox," which is catching if saddle and rugs are used indiscriminately. Anyhow, young horses coming off a long journey should be gently used for a week at all events, and it is most unlikely that any horses direct from a dealer's yard are hunting fit—to say the least of it—no matter how smart and well they may look. Unfortunately there are many tonics and dopes which put a good bloom on the coat, but are ruination to a horse's constitution, and the novice should get her new hunter fit slowly. She will be saved much anxiety if she buys as early as possible in the summer. The cheapest time of all to buy, if you have suitable summer accommodation, is at the end of the previous hunting season.

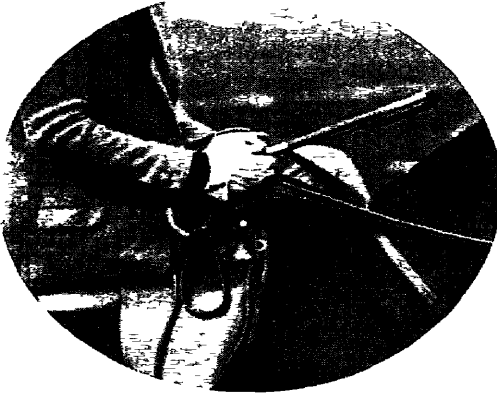
If the novice who is depending on a single hunter is unable to get exactly what she wants from a local source—the good old hunter that knows its job in the country where she is intending to hunt—her next best course is to go to one of the bigger dealers, explain to him where she is going to hunt, tell him the price she is prepared to pay and put herself unreservedly in his hands. He will do his best to suit her and at the worst will be prepared to change for another, which is not always possible with smaller men or when purchasing from friends. The visit to a dealer with the object of purchasing one or, better, two hunters is one of the pleasures of life. Rows of boxes, heads looking out, ears pricked—which, oh which is destined to arrive by the afternoon train home?

For someone with a small purse and a small stable, it is

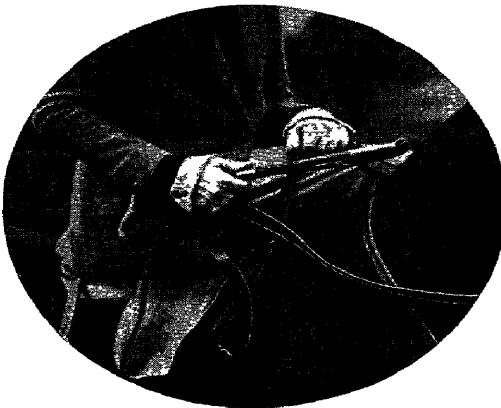
PLATE 8



Never like this



But like this



Or like this.

Photos W D Moss

WAYS OF HOLDING THE REINS AND WHIP

PLATE 9

*"Devia" (by "Devolution"
by "Desmond"), a nice type
of light-weight hunter, full
of quality hunted in Ireland,
Warwickshire, and Beau-
fortshire, a great mare over
timber and a beautiful
mover*

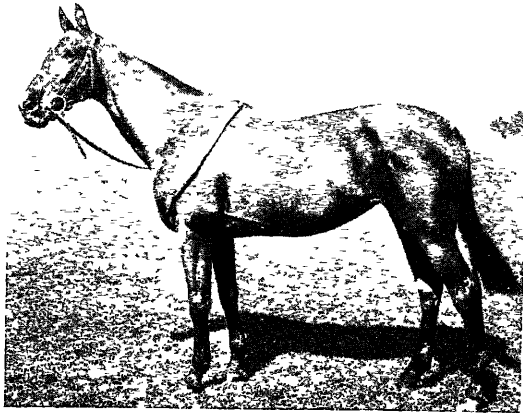


Photo W D Moss

*"Tara" (by "Vigorous"),
a beautifully balanced horse
with a perfect snaffle mouth,
a wonderful hunter, a winner
in the show-ring, and was
hunted by H R H the
Prince of Wales for several
seasons*

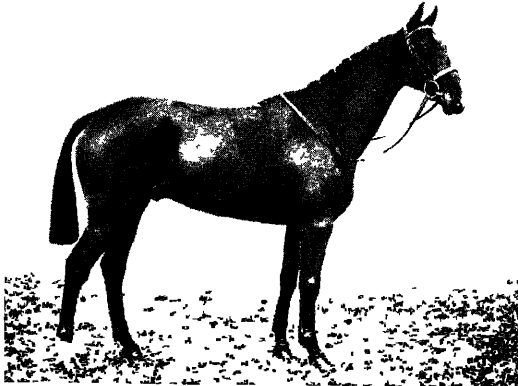


Photo W A Rouch

*"Be Truthful" (by "Stan-
dard Bearer"), a brilliant
hunter and most wonderful
mover, was hunted in Ire-
land, England, and America.
In the same year he won a
point-to-point, three firsts,
and reserve champion at
Olympia*



Photo W D Moss

IDEAL LADIES' HUNTERS

unlikely that absolute perfection can be bought straight away off, but remember that, like an aeroplane, a horse is only as strong as its weakest part. No matter how good the rest of its conformation is, one important place weak will spell disaster sooner or later. It is better in these circumstances to buy a good little one for a little money, than a big horse cheap because he has one or more bad "ifs." It is surprising what a lot of hunting one can see on a pony or cob that can gallop and jump, whereas the bad big one will sure let us down. It is sometimes possible to get a real good horse that is touched in the wind dirt cheap, but in regard to wind, the novice should be very careful. Eight-, nine-, or ten-year-old horses, that have been slight "whistlers" since their early youth, and have not got any worse, will with all probability never get worse. The same may be said of the horse that "whistles" in his slow paces (i.e. in his trot and canter) and the noise more or less disappears in his fast paces, or gallop. "Whistlers", like these may "stay" for ever hunting even in deep going' and it is the best kind of cheap horse, with an "if," you can buy.

Some whistlers do not get any worse for some years while others, particularly common horses, develop into "roarers" and are practically useless as well as a source of annoyance out hunting. The novice girl is advised to be certain that, anyhow, her single hunter has :

- (1) Quality,
- (2) Depth through the heart,
- (3) Short back and legs.

Such a one should anyhow be good for two days a week, whereas the underbred, long-backed, leggy flat-sided horse, however showy he may be elsewhere, is almost certain to tire doing two days a week, and tired horses always damage themselves (and their riders).

Bromley Davenport says that Jem Mason, the famous huntsman and renowned horseman of the last century, declared that "the height of human misery is a ewe-necked horse galloping over a mole-hilly field, downhill, with bad

shoulders, a snaffle bridle, one foot out of the stirrup and a fly in the eye."

A good horse is nearly always a good colour, but there is no doubt that a whole colour (i.e. the same all over) denotes a good hard constitution. Paler coloured legs are conversely a sign of weakness, particularly in a washy chestnut. It is dangerous to generalize about colour, but it is a generally admitted fact that duns and blue-rons are particularly hard horses, provided they show sufficient breeding. Greys seem either very good or very bad. Liver chestnuts are generally toppers, so are horses with white stockings *and* a white face, while many good judges have a great fondness for the all over dark brown with brown muzzle, especially when direct from Ireland.¹ Bright bay with black "points" generally shows breeding and quality.

Small pony ears are apt to denote obstinacy and tricks. It is nice to see long sensitive ears. It is a good sign if you notice the proposed purchase walking round the dealer's yard placing his hind-feet over the marks made by his fore-feet so that they interlock. Horses that appear to "brush" should be carefully looked at by a competent judge—this may be caused by bad shoeing or by weakness, permanent or curable. A fast walker is almost sure to gallop well. A horse that appears to drag his toes, showing more than fair wear on the front of his shoes, should not be bought without due regard to the reason.

It is nice to see hocks that, viewed sideways, standing in a natural position are shaped so that the point of the hock would come just outside a plumb-line running from the outer edge of the rump to the ground.

¹ These may go back to the famous old Irish breed of "hobbie" horses, which were well known as hunters in Elizabethan and Stuart times, are not very big (about 15.3), but are peculiarly hard, sound, and a suitable temperament. One idea being that the "hobbie" was the native Irish horse, crossed with some stallions from Spain long before the Darley Arabian or Godolphin Arab were introduced by Charles II to found the English thoroughbred; but be that as it may, the hardy little dark brown hunter can still be bought cheaply in many districts in the South of Ireland (see Chapter I).

Old horses showing bumps and knocks on their joints merely carry their trade-mark for you to see, in fact an old horse without such marks is decidedly a suspicious fact. A speck in the eye, or even one blind eye, is not at all to be despised by someone in search of a cheap horse, provided all else is good, and here and there one comes across an ugly-looking horse with a heart of gold and a reputation second to none—the exceptions to the rules which make horse-buying so difficult, so tantalizing, and so attractive!

One may remind the novice of old Xenophon's advice to the young Greeks about buying horses over two thousand years ago: "In examining a horse you must first look at his feet, for just as a house proves to be worthless if the foundations are unsound, however well built the upper part may look, so a riding horse will be quite useless even though his other points are good if he has bad feet, for in that case he will be unable to use any of his good points." Of course he was referring to unshod horses, but much of Xenophon's doctrine survives unchanged in modern lore of the horse and his rider, and it is no bad rule even in these days to start looking at a hunter from his feet upwards. A horse that "dishes" badly or turns either foot out should be avoided.

Here and there one finds people who do not care for a blood hunter, and perhaps there are certain hunting countries in which a high-couraged, galloping, blood hunter, accustomed to going fast over his fences, never been taught to creep and crawl and used to the top of the ground only, is not such a safe conveyance as his coarser-bred cousin, but personally one would sooner ride a well-bred pony across such a country than a real common horse at any time.

Within certain obvious limits the whole success of the thoroughbred, or nearly thoroughbred, as a hunter, depends on the person who rides him. Essentially a highly strung, responsive horse, he must be ridden by someone possessing sympathy, tact, courage, and confidence before he can give of his best. The rare combination is undefeatable both in

appearance and in action. So Shakespeare described the riding of Henry of Monmouth :

"As if an angel dropp'd down from the clouds
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus
And witch the world with noble horsemanship."
(Henry IV.)

Possibly those who do not care for the thoroughbred, or nearly thoroughbred, as a hunter, are unable to get the best out of him, by reason of their own temperament. But there is no doubt that the habitual rider of blood horses enjoys several things denied to others.

(1) There is that feeling of serene elation when one's horse responds to the lightest touch of hand and leg to our call for effort at the big, black, uncompromising place, compared to the "wonder if he'll do it" sort of feeling and the necessary "reminder" administered to the "common 'un" under like circumstances.

(2) Secondly, there is that glorious confidence of reserve power in a quality hunter galloping well within himself on an eight-mile point with hounds racing ahead flinging but an odd note here and there, instead of that stark care that one's commoner will be going through things, getting hopelessly tailed off and making one long secretly for a check.

(3) There is the delight in the blood horse who is also a good hack, the springy tread, the play of steel thread muscles under satin skin that make the long way seem so short.

(4) There is the pleasure of our visits to the stables, where fine lean heads turn with prick-eared alertness to greet us, moving delicate feet out of our way.

(5) The real common horse invariably treads on us in the stable, and out hunting if we fall surely he's on us heavily, while the well-bred one will be up in a second and will avoid treading on us all he can.

The woman riding astride, whether a novice or an experienced horsewoman, will find it as a rule easier and cheaper to mount herself than her sister riding side-saddle. On the other hand her sister, fortunate in that money is no

immediate object, and also in that she is a good horsewoman, will be able to ride bigger, stronger, and better horses from the security of her side-saddle seat (see Chapter IV).

Though not comparable with the higher art of making horses, it is certainly an art not to be despised—that of keeping “made” horses good. We all know expensive horses, beautiful performers, that have changed stables and in a short time become quite ordinary in the hands of their new owners. The average woman should be quite pleased if a good horse in her hands maintains his reputation.

Passing from Impossibles to Perfection of Form, and from the novice's First Hunter to the Small Stud, we now proceed to the choice of the Perfect Hunter from the point of view of the woman side-saddle, which, these days, is not easy to find ready made, in spite of the large prices paid and offered.

The ideal hunter for a woman is a “blood” horse full of quality. He need not be “clean-bred,” that is to say actually be in the stud-book, but anyhow look as if he were. For a woman who rides side-saddle, he should have a nice long “front.” A horse inclined to be short in front, feels far more so when you ride him side-saddle than astride. He should have an easy back to fit for a side-saddle (which saves you a lot of trouble); he must not be narrow, and he must be well ribbed-up, so that your saddle is not inclined to slip back—which often happens with a “light-middled,” narrow horse, and nothing is more annoying in a good hunt, both for yourself and the unfortunate man who feels bound to stop and help you, than to find your saddle has gone back, and you have to pull up and have it put forward again. The only remedy for this being a breast-plate, which is an eyesore, and spoils the look of an otherwise well-turned-out horse.

The ideal hunter must be a good ride, he must have perfect shoulders, and move well in all his paces, both in front and behind, above all in his gallop, and really stride out. He must be especially comfortable trotting. Nothing can tire you more than having to do a long trot, either behind hounds going to draw, or hacking home, than riding side-saddle on a

horse that is uncomfortable in his trot. Horses that are quite comfortable trotting astride, are not sometimes at all the same side-saddle. Likewise, a man usually likes a horse when cantering, or galloping, to "lead" with his near-leg, but for a woman side-saddle, nine horses out of ten are much more comfortable when "leading" with the off-leg. Therefore it is a good plan to get your horse into the habit of doing this, and whenever you start to canter he will instinctively lead off with the off-leg. Some do it naturally, but others are rather



He should gallop down a hill with a loose rein—

difficult to get into the way of it, especially if they have always been ridden by a man. A horse that will canter very slowly, while others are trotting, rests you very much, and a woman's hunter should be taught to do this like a "park-hack."

He must, of course, have a good mouth, and know how to "neck-rein" (which is essential at gates), and carry his head in the right place, not too low being the most important. He should be able to gallop down a hill with a loose rein, and must never get his head down and "bore" at you when you want to pull him up, or when galloping down-hill. Above all he should be "well-balanced." Very few women can get the

best out of a horse which is "badly-balanced," as it requires an exceptionally strong horsewoman to get such a one right at his fences, or to collect him in heavy going. The horse that is ideal to ride side-saddle, is the one that makes you always feel you are sitting "in the middle of him," and whatever pace he is going you never seem to find yourself getting "un-balanced."

Colonel G. Brooke thus defines "balance":

"A horse is said to be balanced when his own weight and



that of his rider is distributed over each leg in such proportion as to allow him to use himself with the maximum ease and efficiency at all paces. The head and neck form the governing factors in weight distributions and it is by their position that the horse carries his weight forward or backward as his paces are extended or collected." (*Horse Sense and Horsemanship*.)

For a woman who takes her own line, it is necessary that her horse should be bold and ready to jump any sort of obstacle on his own, even if asked to jump in the opposite direction to which everyone else is going.

What a lot you can gain when hounds are really running, when there is not a moment to lose, and there is an impossible

obstacle in front of you, if you are riding the perfect and handy horse, that responds in a moment when you quickly turn him to jump a place to the right or left, never hesitating for a second. Or the horse that will jump out of a road, with no lead, and other horses going on up it, and not be in the least inclined to "hang" to others.

Even the strongest horsewoman, if she rides side-saddle, is handicapped in keeping a horse straight at his fences, should he be inclined to refuse. The ideal horse should just quicken of his own accord at his fences. He should, of course, really gallop and "stay," and be galloping on when others are tiring in deep going. With *very* few exceptions that is when the "blood" horse counts. He will keep on going, and be galloping, when the common-bred horse is beat, and those people who have never ridden the really high-class, well-bred horse, have missed a great deal in life. There is nothing more exhilarating than to be on such a horse when hounds are racing!—the going very deep, but you hardly notice it as your horse goes through it "like a train"! Perhaps you have to gallop up a hill towards the end of the hunt, other horses are "sobbing," and even your own feels a bit blown, but when he gets to the top, you feel him expand his ribs under you and fill his lungs (the sure sign of a good stayer)—and away he goes as fresh as ever!

One hears people say at the end of a good hunt, that it was spoilt by the heavy-going, and that they were praying for hounds to check, or go slower, as their horses were so blown. While perhaps you, yourself, were lucky enough to be riding one so good that you never realized the going was deep at all.

Of course, the very fast hunter is rarely really extended. He is galloping easily and well within himself, when the slower common horse is probably "all-out" throughout a hunt—and this is perhaps partly the explanation of why the well-bred horse "stays." But there are exceptions, and occasionally one that can't "stay" if the going is deep, although nearly clean-bred and a very fast horse in the ordinary way.

There are many fast hunters that seem like "staying" for

ever in a hunt, that can't begin to do so in a Point-to-Point—even on good going. It is the “top-pace” that kills.

A woman's hunter should always stand still in a crowded gateway or outside a covert—especially if she rides side-saddle—as if he keeps twisting round, she has no leg on the off-side to kick him with, to stop him “barging” into others, and making himself a nuisance. He must never kick in a gateway, under any provocation. He should also stand quietly, and take his turn, at gaps, or where in a cramped country one has to “queue up” at the only jumpable place in a fence. And in a country where there is every different kind of fence (such as the Duke of Beaufort's) he *must* be clever, and willing to go either slow or fast at his fences—often very blind ones. He may have to “bank” a fence, and even “kick-back” at it, “spread” himself well, or be able to “go high” over one—especially at timber and walls, which he will want to jump very cleanly.

In countries like Leicestershire and Northamptonshire, where there is a lot of ridge and furrow, a horse must be able to gallop well over it. Nothing is worse than one that goes to the bottom of every furrow, or even tries to jump each one!—and nothing stops a horse more. All get used to it, but some naturally gallop over it so easily that you can hardly tell the difference between a field of ridge and furrow and a level field. If you take your own horses out of a provincial country to hunt in Leicestershire, you will often find them, anyhow at first, very worried by the ridge and furrow—continually changing their legs—and, also, not quite as fast as you thought they were!

In these days of tarmac roads, the ideal hunter should never shy, as it is then that a horse invariably slips up and gives you a nasty fall. Also he should be good in traffic, and pass every kind of motor or steam-vehicle: nothing is more frightening than riding down the edge of a slippery tarmac road on a horse that shies badly! He seems to know you are feeling frightened, and invariably takes the opportunity of shying worse than he ever does on a non-slippery road, or in

the fields. In fact, he seems to look for something to shy at!

The ideal height of a hunter, for a woman of average size, is perhaps 16.1—although, of course, there are many exceptions, and some of the best hunters one has known have been small, and little more than ponies. But probably, anyhow for the Shires, a horse wants to be at least 16 hands—as the size of the enclosures, and the high stiff fences, take so much out of a small hunter. There is an old saying: "A good big one will always beat a good little one."

Many, even brilliant horses, especially lazy blood ones, if always ridden by a woman (unless she is an exceptional rider), want a really good man on them, now and again, to sharpen them up, or they may be inclined to get "sticky" and cunning at their fences. In the same way there are a great many horses that get the name for refusing, or even being bad jumpers, from being badly ridden, and getting their own way—but if a really good and strong horseman rides them two or three times to "straighten" them, it is extraordinary how the so-called bad horse can develop into a champion.

Besides being all that is wanted to ride, and go hunting on, the ideal hunter should be a good feeder and "doer," and very sound, so that he will come out regularly in his turn, doing a long day if you need him, without being a source of anxiety, both to your groom and yourself.

Balance is probably the first essential in a perfect hunter for a woman side-saddle, more important to her even than mouth and manners. With a balanced horse she can get quickly off the mark when hounds go away. The great test for balance is to gallop him down-hill with plenty of freedom to see if he can use his shoulders well yet coming back to his bridle when you ask him, flexing his jaw preparatory to collection either for jumping a fence, going through a boggy gateway, or pulling up.

There is yet another type of ladies' hunter worthy of mention, which, though rare, is a most valuable animal—one that takes care of itself and the passenger on board. One has in

mind a certain strawberry roan, not much to look at, but short-backed, short-legged, with a fair shoulder and a pair of intelligent pointed ears above a broad forehead. This horse has brains. His rider has no science, never knows where hounds are, is rather short-sighted, and not at all intelligent, but she is always conveyed somewhere handy in a hunt, close up behind the second flight. The strawberry roan ridden with a flopping rein gallops along when hounds are running, follows the right leaders, saves himself in heavy plough, steadies himself at a fence, invariably chooses the better place, selects the least boggy looking of two ways, slithers through a slamming gate, never goes further than necessary, takes care on a slippery road, picks his feet over rabbit holes, and pushes himself unostentatiously into a good position in a crowd. About two o'clock in the afternoon he plainly conveys to his rider that it is time for them both to return home, and she has only to leave it to him to be carried thither by the shortest route. Indeed, should she endeavour to direct otherwise, the old horse merely would not pay any attention, and she wisely desists from interference, with the result that she has hunted him twice a week, season in and season out, for over ten winters !

As final advice to the woman who rides side-saddle with pleasure and ease on her ideal hunter one would say, Keep him till you are *obliged* to part ; you may never find another or so perfect a friend.

BRIDLES

Greek legend ascribes the introduction of a bridle to a woman, the goddess Athena, whereby she aided Bellerophon to control the winged horse Pegasus.

To-day the bridle and bit play an important part in the enjoyment of riding our modern hunter.

A wise horsewoman cannot take too much trouble in finding the correct bridle to suit her horse. It is surprising how a horse can alter completely in different bridles and how much better and lighter his mouth may feel in one than another.

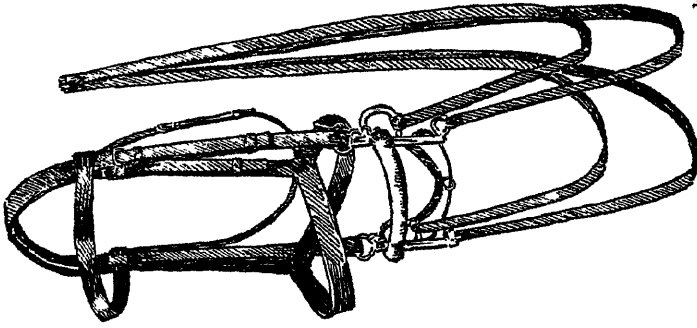
A plain *snaffle* is the simplest bit in the world, and is much used in Ireland, where so many of our best young hunters learn their business. It makes them bold fencers by not interfering with their mouths while jumping, but in a snaffle bridle it is difficult to collect or to balance a horse properly. Few women can hold a horse together in a plain snaffle over a galloping country, in heavy going with big fences, especially on a big horse or one with at all bad action. Here and there one comes across a perfect-mouthed horse that goes best in a snaffle, yet is beautifully balanced in all his paces.

If you ride your horse in a snaffle, choose a jointed, *thick*, round one with large rings, thin snaffles being apt to bruise the corners of the mouth. One wide rein looks much nicer than double reins with a snaffle,¹ and the single rein can be plaited to prevent it slipping through your fingers on a wet day—soaked gloves, combined with slippery reins and cold hands, can be very dangerous hunting, so it is well to always have a pair of dry woolly gloves tucked under the girth concealed by the flap of your saddle, whence you can easily pull them out dry if wanted.

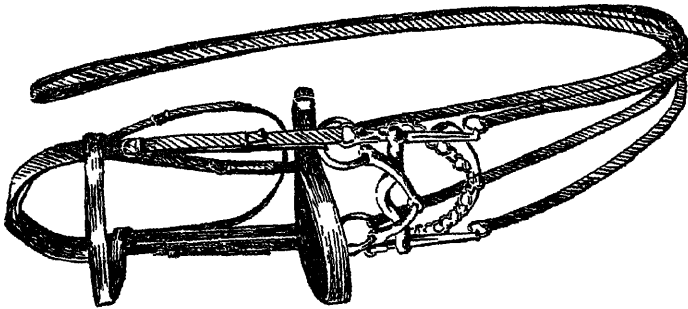
The exceptional hunter—a *very* light-mouthed, rather "hot" horse, who shakes his head, throws it about, and is genuinely upset by a double bridle—is sometimes quite easy to ride in a snaffle; but extremely few horses have what may be called "a real snaffle mouth," meaning that they bend nicely, feel balanced all the time, and do not pull at you, stick out their noses or lean on your hands. Some sensitive-mouthed horses that do so in a snaffle may have lovely mouths when ridden in a *Pelham*, which is probably the best bridle for a woman who is not very strong on a horse, and perhaps buys one from Ireland that has always been ridden in a snaffle, and yet has almost too light a mouth to start off at once in a double bridle.

The majority of English hunters are ridden in *medium-sized*

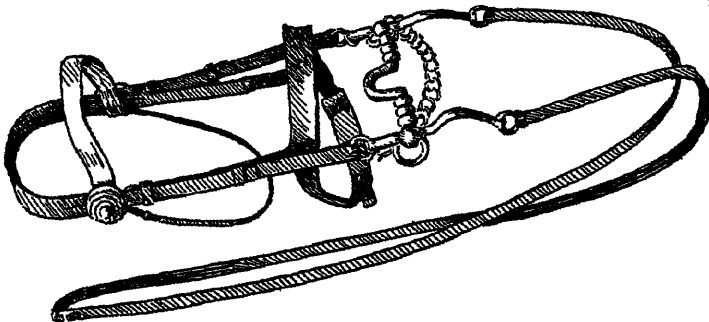
¹ But a double-reined snaffle in conjunction with a properly adjusted running martingale on the lower reins can be used by an expert in the same way as a double bridle to raise or lower the horse's head by bearing on the lower rein or not.



Vulcanite Pelham or Centaur bit.



Medium cheek double bridle.
BRIDLES FOR LADIES' HORSES



Hanoverian (hacking bridle).

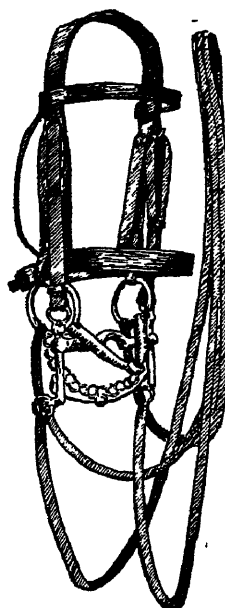
double bridles. This is an excellent bridle for the all-round requirements of hunting in a big crowded country—one can ride more on the snaffle, or on the curb at will, or put equal pressure on both at the same time. One can generally find a double bridle to suit the mouth of every well-mannered hunter. The "port" (which presses on the roof of the mouth) should be low practically always for a hunter; you can increase the power of the bridle by using a longer "cheek" (the side piece), i.e. the strength of the leverage, for horses inclined to take hold, rather than by using a higher port.

You should always take care that your double bridle is properly put on, throat lash not too tight—the bit should be as high as possible without pressing on the corners of the lips, if too small it will nip the lips and make the horse keep tossing his head. It should fit comfortably, kept in position by the "bars" of the mouth. The curb chain should lie absolutely flat in the chin groove—(hooking it on correctly is a knack you must learn from an efficient groom as soon as possible). The curb chain is right when you can insert two fingers between it and the horse's chin while the reins are slack. Should there be signs of it rubbing the tender skin, immediately replace with a leather curb or else have the curb chain lined with soft chamois leather to prevent it chafing. The curb chain should draw tight when the leverage of the cheek is applying the correct pressure on the tongue and roof of the horse's mouth. If too loose it will be useless and catch the chin; if too tight the mouth is apt to go numb (unless the rider has super hands and hardly touches her horse's mouth at all). The firmer one's seat the more severe can be the bit we use. No horse with a sore mouth can do himself justice, and is not fit to ride until it is quite healed.

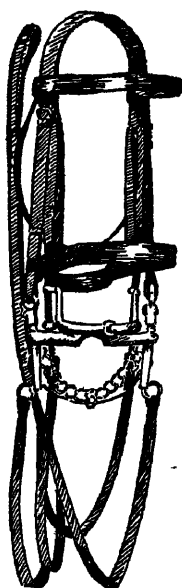
Bridles should be made by a first-class firm, and the leather should be *stitched* to the steel parts for hunting. Buckled bridles are useful in which to try out various horses and bits, but are unsightly in the hunting-field as well as more liable to give way at inconvenient times. It is very necessary to see that all steel parts are kept clean and bright with a burnisher,



Smooth-jointed snaffle with
plaited reins.



Short cheek bridle
(adjustable).



Short cheek and gag.



Twisted snaffle.

and the reins supple even when not in use. The steel parts can be put away wiped with an oiled rag, but, of course, a good groom looks after his tack well. If the cleaning is a serious labour, bits made of stainless steel or chromium-plated are quite satisfactory.

Grooms are apt to over-bit most ladies' horses. It is only from a good stable that you see a bridle perfectly put on a horse: nose-band fitting, throat lash loose, but not too loose, bridoon and bit in the right place, not too high and not too low, as well as clean and bright. The reins should be soaked in neatsfoot oil if they become hard and stiff, after a very wet day; the leather should always be soft and supple in your fingers, and so well cleaned that your gloves are never soiled by the reins. Always buy good saddle soap for stable use. Substitutes and patent polishes are seldom good or economical.

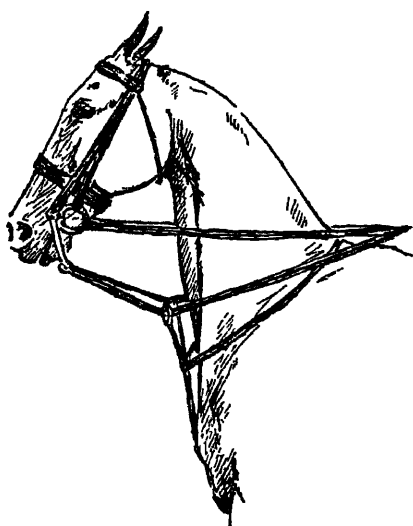
MARTINGALES are not necessary on all hunters, but they are very generally used among hunting people in England. A "standing" martingale of the right length is excellent to prevent a horse or pony throwing his head up and hitting you in the face, which most young horses and some old ones are inclined to do. Of course, it must not be too tight to prevent him using his head. Many people use one for show jumping and schooling when the rider is trying to sit well forward; and quite often a standing martingale is all right hunting, but if a horse does come down in a blind ditch he may not be able to save himself so well, as a horse balances himself by full use of his head.

What is known as a "running" martingale is the type most often seen. It should go on the curb rein of a double bridle, and be adjusted so that there is no pull when the head is in the exact right position—if too loose, of course, being no use, and if too tight, making uncomfortable pressure on the horse's mouth.

The rider should be sure that the martingale rings cannot slip over the small ring on the cheek of the curb bit to which the rein is attached. Failure to note this may cause a dangerous

accident, as a horse is apt to go mad from the pain if his head is tied in like this, and may rear over backwards with you or bolt. Should such a thing happen and there is time, quickly slip off your horse, undo the throat lash and try to get the bridle off. To avoid any possibility of such accidents, it is best to have a martingale with *flat*-shaped rollers instead of ordinary rings to use with your double bridles, and always to have snaffles with large rings. (See sketches, pages 85 and 87.)

Most hunters can probably be got to go in a double bridle of some type or other, and many good horsemen consider that an animal that requires any other form of fancy bit is not a suitable ladies' hunter. Of course, a great deal depends on the rider's own hands. Some women can ride horses in bridles in which others would be mere passengers. A rider who is not strong on her horse, but has very good hands, can generally afford to "over-bit" her horse—which means putting a big bridle on, say,



Too tight "running" martingale.

a high-couraged, keen, big-striding horse, inclined to pull. By a "big bridle" is meant a double bridle, consisting of a *long-cheeked curb* with a *twisted bridoon* (snaffle). A "*gag*" is also a big bridle that is useful with some horses that have spoiled mouths or are inclined to get their heads down, or to "lean" on you. It is used instead of the bridoon. (See page 87.)

If you have to ride your horse in a big bridle always remember to give him his head well when he jumps, on no account touching his mouth as he lands (the one exception to this rule being if he "pecks" badly on landing, or nearly falls, he can be helped back on his legs by sitting still and keeping well hold

of his head, but this requires an excellent horsewoman). "Sitting still" is the main thing, and on many occasions when in bad difficulties it is wisest to give your horse his head completely, as he is probably the cleverer at knowing how to get his own legs out of awkward predicaments. Few novices appreciate how, not interfered with, a horse is so good at saving himself. This is where a side-saddle scores. You can sit rock still while a horse heaves about under you, and need not fall even if your foot may have touched the ground. Often one sees the astride rider lose his or her balance on such occasions, chuck the horse in the mouth—in fright or by mistake, it matters not which—and consequently down they both come, losing their place in the run while you, on the side-saddle, go soaring on. Good hunters can be got into the habit of refusing—especially at anything at all high, such as timber or stone walls, from getting a "job" in the mouth every time they jump.

BANBURY bridles suit some horses very well, the leverage of cheek pieces being movable.

A nice bridle for a pony or a good hack is a short-cheeked curb with a single rein (and no bridoon) and a standing martingale. Also a Hanoverian. (See page 85).

(NOTE that martingales are not permitted in the show ring.)

Horses which are inclined to pull, often open their mouths, and a good way to stop this bad habit is to ride them in what is called a "dropped nose band"—which is a strap put round the nose below the ordinary noseband and the bit.

A "kineton" noseband is the same principle applied to a snaffle bridle, and holds some hard pullers extremely well. A complete change of bridles often works miracles (anyhow, for a time) with a difficult horse.

Do not have your reins unnecessarily long, as the slack ends get in your way.

CHAPTER IV

ASTRIDE OR SIDE-SADDLE: THE QUESTION

"A rider is as good as he rides, a method is no better than the man."

(LT.-COL. J. A. BARRY, U.S. Cavalry.)

AT the present time it is a moot point whether a woman should ride side-saddle or astride. Thirty years ago women riding other than sideways in England could almost be counted on the fingers of the two hands, while now the numbers must be fairly equal, so that the cross-saddle seat is often referred to as "the modern," and women who do so as "new fashioned." But as a matter of fact the earliest women riders rode astride. It is on record that a Roman general commanding the army occupying the Rhine in the days of one of the later Emperors was reprimanded for riding in trousers and permitting his wife to do so also (trousers, of course, being the garb of Barbarians and as surprising to the Romans as a general hunting in a kilt would be to us to-day!). In fact, all women who rode at all, rode either astride or pillion behind a man till the fourteenth century. The first side-saddle is said to have been introduced into England by Anne of Bohemia, wife of Richard II, about 1380, but for a long time side-saddles were only used by the wealthiest ladies of quality, for the majority it must have been a matter of astride or pillion-riding. A Dutch print of 1572-1619 shows a woman riding sideways in a pannier saddle with a foot-rest on a palfrey with bad shoulders, decorated with a plume of feathers on his bridle, while an etching of about the same period (1600) shows a lady riding astride in baggy breeches tied over the knees by ribbon garters finished by large bows. Some fifty years later evidently both seats were in vogue. Hortense Mancini, the attractive Duchesse de Mazarin, ran away from her dull husband, scandalizing every-

one by riding across Europe dressed "in Cavalier's costume," and took refuge with Charles II in England.

To-day a woman may please herself entirely as to which seat she adopts without upsetting anyone, and she should weigh up the pros and cons which suit her particular case best.

The chief advantages in favour of the astride seat are :

(1) The average woman being light can ride smaller well-bred horses, i.e. much the cheapest to buy.

(2) She need not consider nearly so much about saddles fitting "backs," thus has a wider choice and is likely to get mounts from friends far oftener than if she were riding side-saddle.

(3) She does not require such a good groom experienced in the troubles of side-saddles.

(4) She can dispense with the services of an expert saddle-fitter, in the same way that she does not need to go to the expensive habit-makers for her clothes. Two pairs of good well-cut cord or cavalry twill breeches should see her through a season at, say, seven guineas each (or less). Her coats, made by *any good* man's tailor, will be much cheaper and last longer than the average habit coat. Habits require expert cleaning and pressing, whereas an ordinary black cloth or tweed coat is the easiest garment to clean—if any soaked, muddled clothes can ever be called easy! She will need two pairs of really good blacking leather boots cut by the best bootmaker which must always be kept on "trees." A pair of good Jodhpore breeches are a serviceable and comfortable costume for hacking and a sixth of the cost of a nice summer habit with the brown boots and light breeches sometimes thought absolutely necessary for side-saddle.

(5) Her equipment in saddles will, of course, cost her much less also; £10 to £12, compared to £25; and one will likely do her compared to two or three.

(6) She will ride in a way less likely to tire her horse—a great advantage if riding to and from hunting is a consideration—and at least a stone and a half lighter.

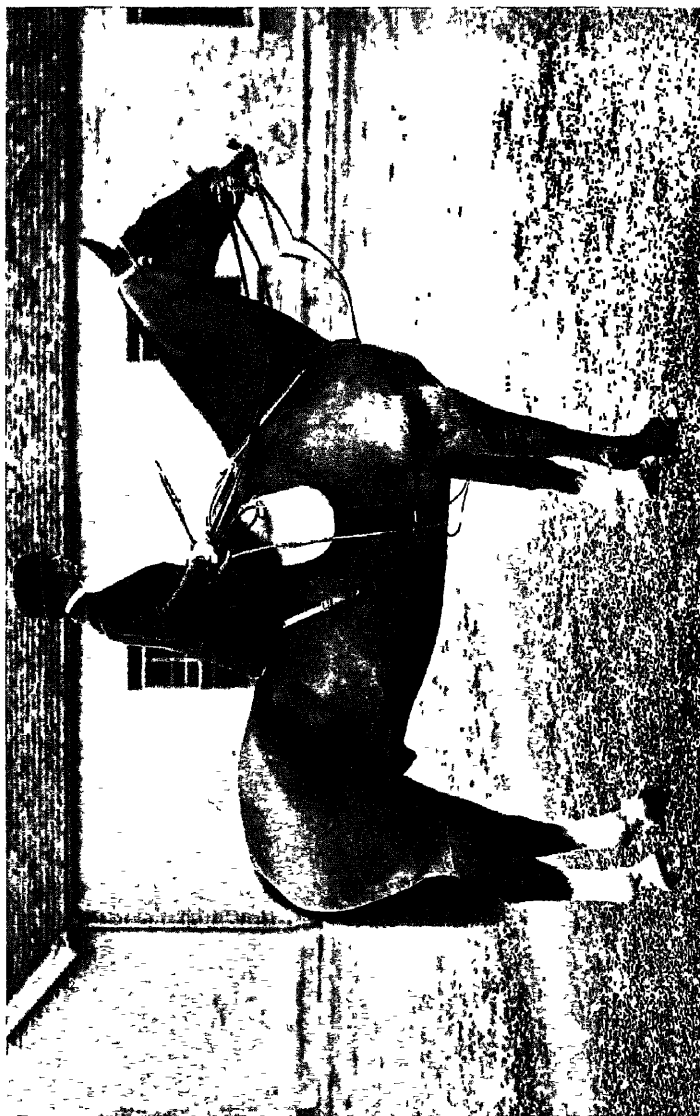


Photo W. D. Moss

"HANDSOME IS AS HANDSOME DOES . . ."

A great type of common-looking hunter and magnificent jumper "Whiteface" was hunted by his owner, Lady Diana Sbedden, for thirteen seasons in the Beaufort country and only fell twice



AN UNRIVALLED PAIR

*Mrs Maiber Jackson, equally well known bunting in Ireland and England as a brilliant performer on any kind of horse
Here riding her famous grey bunter "Gloaming".*

(7) It is undoubtedly easier to get off and on quickly astride than it is side-saddle.

(8) To some women cross-saddle is more comfortable than sideways.

(9) It is easy to change over with a man rider at any time, which is often a great convenience.

(10) Lastly, if a horse falls on top of his rider she is less likely to be badly hurt, as she is more likely to be thrown clear and there are no pummels to dig in.

In every way astride is cheaper and less trouble.

The disadvantages are that :

(1) The average woman is likely to take more falls, because the average woman lacks sufficient physical strength to maintain contact cross-saddle under all the circumstances.

(2) Now and again a woman breaks a collar-bone, dislocates a shoulder, or gets concussed from being "thrown from her mount"—(as the newspapers call it) when side-saddle she would have sat firm, saved her horse, and not had a fall at all.

(3) Few women are good enough to ride *big strong* horses astride—which many can do side-saddle.

It is significant that a certain girl took eleven tosses in a season hunting astride, while of three others side-saddle in the same sort of class, only one had a single fall during the same period. While on the one hand these astride tosses were "cushy" ones, but on the other nine of them most certainly would not have happened at all side-saddle. However, there is a marked tendency to-day to give children and young people generally a much better start, their saddles fit them better, and the practice of riding in comfortable saddles and well-fitting Jodhpore breeches gives girls a confidence and security which was sadly lacking in the days when their mothers and aunts learnt to ride (chiefly at the hands of old grooms), with the results that the modern young horsewoman is miles better performer than the pioneers of the astride seat, who in addition were hampered with divided skirts and had every man's word against them! To-day there are young women born and bred to the cross-saddle who cannot be beat

across country or anywhere else, and not all of them ride very perfect horses.

SIDE-SADDLE. The advantages over cross-saddle are :

- (1) Many women feel a deal safer ;
- (2) More comfortable ;
- (3) Most women look a deal nicer ;
- (4) Many can ride thus bigger, better, galloping horses.

The drawbacks being :

(1) That “backs” are a worrying consideration (unless you have excellent grooms and expense is relatively no object).

(2) That good saddles, habits, and valets are costly.

On the other hand a good horsewoman side-saddle, well mounted, well turned out, is a credit to her menfolk, which they are the first to appreciate, and somehow, in spite of the above-mentioned defects, it is extraordinary how much hunting the side-saddle rider gets out of a few good horses she knows well, doing little damage to herself or anyone else, season after season, and having no trouble with “backs” by dint of taking a few simple precautions.

At one time the cross-saddle was condemned for women by doctors, at another the side-saddle suffered from the same criticism ; the individual should examine both ways carefully, from her own point of view, find out which seat she herself likes best and which is most applicable in her case, stick to the chosen one and make herself as proficient in that selected for hunting as she possibly can.

Most of life is a compromise ; one must make the most of one's opportunities and minimize one's disabilities !

The ideal is to be proficient in both saddles ; and it is certainly very delightful, even if you are a convinced sideways rider, to be able to hack astride, and on occasions to snatch an extra day's hunting on a pony, or a friend's hunter, whose back you hesitate to risk in a side-saddle to which it is not accustomed.

THE ASTRIDE SEAT

The woman learning to ride astride must put herself in the hands of a competent teacher, and if she is entirely without experience she must be content to practise steadily and quietly for a long time in the riding-school under a qualified teacher. She must strive to adopt a firm, natural, and graceful seat combining strength and elasticity. Every figure varies, and the seat adopted, though conforming to accepted principles, must be adapted to the individual. It is hopeless for a short-legged woman with round calves expecting to grip with the inside of her lower leg like a Grand National jockey. She will have to maintain her equilibrium largely by balance and a grip of the knees and thighs (as grip against the side of a stoutish calf rolls like a rubber doll!). A long, thin-legged woman probably can get a firm grip all down the inside of her leg like a good man. The chief things to avoid in any seat are :

- (1) Sticking the toes out (you may run them into a gate-post !);
- (2) Pointing the toes downwards with the heel up ;
- (3) Gripping with the back of the calf with the knees pointing outwards.

You can soon tell where you are gripping by examining the marks in your boots and breeches !

Saddles made with a bit of crêpe rubber let in just where the knees come are nice to grip. You want to get your knees as close into the horse as possible. All sorts of thick stuffing and flaps and pads are horrible as they prevent you sitting into your horse and "feeling" him. A saddle for a woman is generally comfortable made rather narrower across the middle of the seat than a man's, and the novice should be careful not to start on a saddle that is small for her. A new saddle is more slippery than an oldish one !

STARTING JUMPING

There are various theories as to the best way of riding cross-saddle over fences; the keen young woman should study them all and see which applies best in her own case. She cannot call herself a good rider until she has a firm seat, can jump leaving her horse's head alone, and is balanced at all paces.

For jumping the back must be supple, as it were with a hinge in the middle. The rider must go with her horse, not be left behind nor yet go over his head; she must keep her heels out of his side and never unintentionally use the aids. Balance jumping comes with practice over small easy obstacles.

Practise every day riding without stirrups, starting a few minutes at a time and working up to half an hour at all paces, which will tend to get up the muscles and make a firm graceful seat quicker than anything else. Jumping without reins or stirrups in a school is better still.

Ride always with as long reins as possible, the shoulders, forearm, wrists and fingers supple and the reverse of terse or strained in any way, so as to have as much play as possible between the horse's mouth and your body. The hands should be kept low, the elbows into the sides—not poked out in ugly fashion nor cramped into your ribs. Keep your legs still and your heels out of your horse's flanks, your feet horizontal, as in a walking position, with harder pressure on the inner side of the stirrups to aid in keeping the knees tight into the saddle-flaps, as explained on page 62.

We cannot do better than quote Colonel G. Brooke's advice to the young rider:

"It is essential for the beginner to get a good natural seat, which should be comfortable and strong without being stiff. This is best obtained by a certain amount of riding without stirrups, as the rider will thus develop both his sense of balance and strength of grip. First of all, sit square to the front and comfortably on the saddle with the muscles relaxed, then close the legs so as to grip with the flat of the thigh and the knee,

keeping the lower part of the leg below the knee free and not stiff. The body should be supple from the hips so that it should swing easily backwards or forwards as required, or lean over in the direction in which the horse is turning.”¹

Once *proficient* in this hacking seat the novice can start riding a horse at the gallop and learning to jump.

She will probably have to take up her stirrups by a hole, or even two. The length of stirrup is always a difficulty to a novice. It varies with individuals and also with requirements. It is generally more comfortable to hack quietly along with the natural seat above suggested, but in order to grip strongly for galloping or for jumping, you should shorten your stirrups so as to bring the weight forward, with the saddle dees about the centre of balance. You want to be able to stand in your stirrups, just clear of the saddle when the horse is galloping, and you see many of the best horsemen of to-day sitting slightly forward in the saddle with the point of the knee in line with the point of the toe. This means riding tolerably short, and if adopted whilst jumping, and exaggerated, tends to what is known as the “forward seat.” This seat is ideal from the point of view of giving the horse every chance to jump out as big and as high as possible—it is absolutely necessary for show jumping in order to lighten the horse’s back and quarters, but in the hunting-field we have to be concerned with other things as well as the ideal leap from the horse’s point of view. We have to creep and crawl, jump up-hill and down, fast and slow. In practice even the best exponents of the exaggerated forward seat are apt to be pitched off if a horse does anything unexpected, like pecking badly

¹ It is interesting to compare Colonel Brooke’s advice with Xenophon, who counselled the young rider of *his* day, 370 B.C. (who, of course, rode without stirrups and saddle other than a folded cloth perhaps), “to sit as if he were standing upright with his legs astride, not as if he were sitting in a chair. For thus he will get a better grip of his horse with his thighs . . . the lower leg and the foot must hang lax and easy from the knee down . . . the rider must also accustom himself to keeping the body above the hips as loose as possible, for thus he will be able to stand more fatigue and will be less liable to come off.”

(*Treatise on Horsemanship*, 370 B.C. Translation, E. C. MARCHANT.)

on landing. The best horsemen, show jumping, are apt to take tosses if their horses refuse the gate dead short at Olympia, while few of them riding a little longer would come off if their horse stopped at a gate out hunting. If you can maintain your balance riding short, jumping all sorts of places out hunting, it is ideal from the horse's point of view to ride short and of course is essential for racing. To do so you will require terrific grip to aid that balance when:

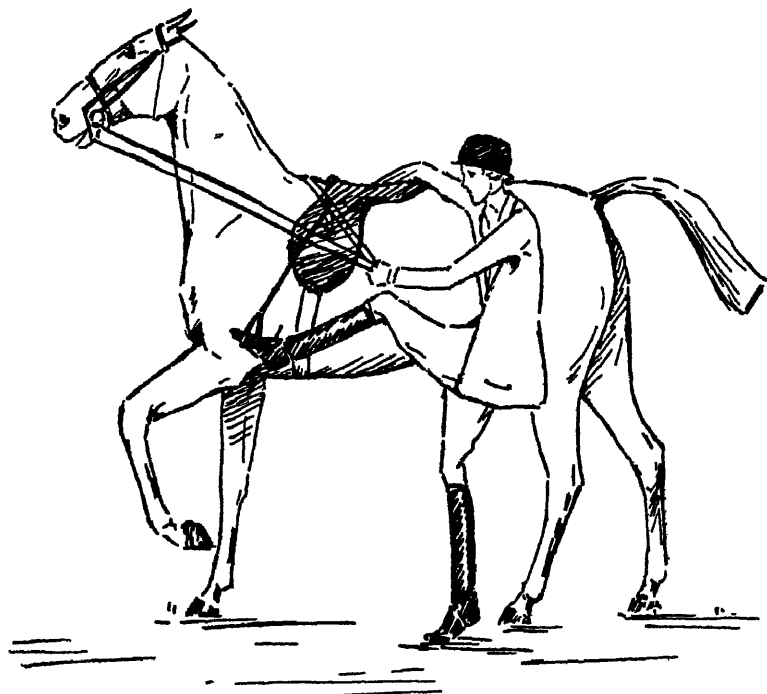
- (1) The horse makes a mistake;
- (2) You find something unexpected.

It is quite different jumping the triple bar at the local show to popping over a small fence and finding a big ditch the other side with a drop, and remember that unexpected things happen often out hunting and the woman who falls off the forward seat very constantly need not expect much sympathy and is a great nuisance to everyone.

Some of the best men riders grip so hard and so strongly that they make a horse unused to them sore on either side below the flap of the saddle. It is unlikely that many women will ever be strong enough to really ride *gripping* to such a degree!

On the other hand a woman should not ride over-long. A useful rough gauge for ordinary hacking purposes to try the length of the stirrups is to put the iron under your arm-pit when the tips of the fingers should come to the safety bar; also when you are mounted, sitting easily and the feet dangling loose out of the stirrups, your irons should just about touch your ankle bones. The majority of women astride ride over-long, probably because they do not feel that they can grip strongly enough when riding short. Riding long depends for security more on balance and is all right unless this balance is lost through something unexpected happening when the extra leverage of the leg thrust forward, or out of balance, with a stiffened knee makes the rider's chances of recovery small! The seats of American cowboys and Australian stockmen are typical examples of the use of the long stirrup, but it should be noted that though magnificent horsemen, they ride

in saddles which are extremely difficult to fall out of. Their saddles are designed to make long hours on horseback as comfortable as possible, and their half-made, grass-fed horses are a different proposition to our corn-fed, artificially kept



The wrong way to get on.

hunters, whose comfort is of considerable importance as well as our own.

Probably the best thing for a woman to do is to model her hunting-seat on the most easy, secure, supple, balanced and graceful lines possible in her case, riding neither too long nor too short, best suited to her own particular make and shape, whether long-legged or short, thick or thin, and for all kinds of work—including long days in the saddle, jumping, galloping, turning and twisting—with the maximum comfort to the rider combined with the minimum of discomfort to the horse.

A woman astride should practise pulling up her girths and shortening her stirrups without aid and without getting off. It is quite an easy matter to pull up your girths by shifting the knee forward and with the foot still dangling in the stirrup to pick up the saddle-flap and feel for the holes with the one hand while riding slowly forward and holding the reins with the other.

It is a good thing on the way back from hunting to let your girths out a hole and your stirrups down a hole or two ; this eases you and changes the weight for the horse. It will ease him still more if you get off and walk beside him for ten minutes of the long hack home.

Practice in mounting and dismounting from both sides is an advantage. Land lightly in the saddle. Never allow yourself to flop heavily—one horse may not mind but another will. Look out for that buck when a cold saddle comes down on his back ! Teach your own horse to stand still while you mount, and do not try to vault up without stirrups unless you are a really nimble person—otherwise an undignified scramble will finish with you on your back !

THE SIDE-SADDLE SEAT

As was the case with the woman riding astride, it is here also difficult to lay down exactitudes with regard to the woman riding side-saddle, because likewise so much depends on the individual herself, her shape, her strength, temperament, and so on, which must go towards forming her seat on a horse.

In Chapter II we have already discussed the chief essentials in the making of a good horsewoman—it now remains to put these theories into practice with the side-saddle seat, and chiefly from the hunting point of view. The actual seat, of course, is only one of the component parts of the good horsewoman, but without a firm seat, attained through grip and balance in the degree and the way best suited to our own conformation, we cannot expect to get out of the ruck, no matter how perfect our theory may be, our habit tailored, or

however light our hands on the reins. Some women are extra strong in the arms and the shoulders, or in the back or the thighs ; a woman with weak wrists and arms may have a relatively strong back and thus attain a very strong seat ; one may be short-legged and strong, and another long-legged and weak, or conversely, and each one will gradually have to try out various methods towards attaining a good seat that suits her particular case. It does not at all follow that tall Mrs. A, who goes so well, has an exactly similar seat to small Mrs. B, who is such a nailer across country.

We must all aim :

(1) At the strongest seat possible with maximum comfort to rider ;

(2) Minimum discomfort to horse ;

(3) To look as graceful as we can ;

(4) To get a " feel " of the horse.

The main essential is that the side-saddle should perfectly fit both the rider and her horse, so that both are comfortable under all circumstances—otherwise sore backs are certain to occur, that most dreaded of disgraces.

HISTORY OF THE SIDE-SADDLE

The first side-saddles were after the fashion of a pillion, and the rider sat sideways holding on to the high peak in front. This peak was much like the horn in front of the American cowboy's saddle to-day—a fact which requires little explanation, as of course the " Mexican saddle " is a direct descendant, with few modifications, of the saddles introduced into the New World between 1550 and 1660 by the Spanish Conquistadors with the horses they brought with them from the plains of Andalusia. This peak, or pummel, remained in general use for men's saddles in Europe till about the early eighteenth century. Some time during the fifteenth or sixteenth century it was found that by slight alteration to its position a woman could get an excellent grip sideways by putting her leg round the peak of a man's saddle, and the side-saddle with one pummel

was launched. (This is illustrated, Plate 4, Chapter I.) Later a second pummel was added on the off-side of the front of the saddle for the rider to hold on by hand.

(NOTE.—There are two side-saddles of this pattern preserved at the Royal Mews, Buckingham Palace, made for H.M. Queen Victoria and Queen Alexandra.)

This type of side-saddle lasted a long time, and the grip given was good enough, as there was practically no jumping or really hard galloping to speak of.

(NOTE.—Hunters turned out to graze or feed on hay, oat straw, and occasionally a handful of beans were not so given to bucking, and it is only when jumping, galloping, or if a horse shies or bucks badly that the lower pummel comes into serious use.)

The lower or leaping pummel is said to have been invented by Thomas Oldaker, huntsman to Earl Berkeley (1788 to 1820), after he broke his leg, and trying to hunt side-saddle found he could not jump fences without a grip for his left leg.

For many years side-saddles were ornamented with stitching, though not with the elaboration of Queen Elizabeth, who paid £266 13s. 4d. "for a side-saddle of black velvet, richly embroidered with gold and pearls and the harness of silk and gold."

All the old saddles had to be made high in front as the trees fitted straight over the horse's withers—not cut back as now, so that the rider sat very much on a slope.

(NOTE.—The modern side-saddle tree is built of strongest steel tested to stand up to a strain of seven and a half tons, whereas the old trees, of course, were wood, later reinforced with iron. Henry V's saddle, preserved in Westminster Abbey, has a tree of oak, and is padded with canvas stuffed with hay.)

About 1880 the "cut back" or "French" tree was introduced for side-saddles, enabling the front of the saddle to be much lower and giving the rider a more level seat. About the same time Mr. Wilton, of Messrs. Champion and Wilton, invented a safety bar. Before this some sort of safety stirrup

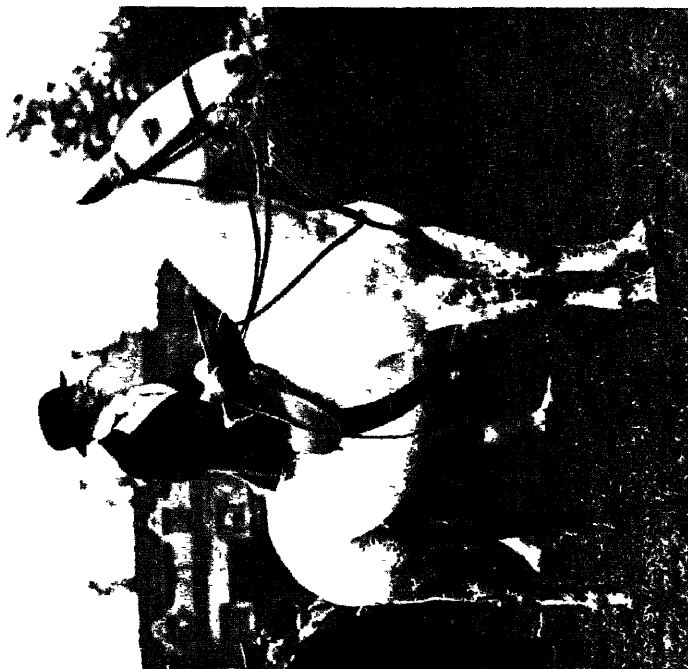


Photo Graystone Laird, Bath
SIDE-SADDLE OR ASTRIDE—TWO HARD ONES TO BEAT
Miss Dolly Miles, the hardest lady to lounds with the Duke of Beaufort's, always brims side-saddle. She is a fine rider and exceptionally strong on a horse

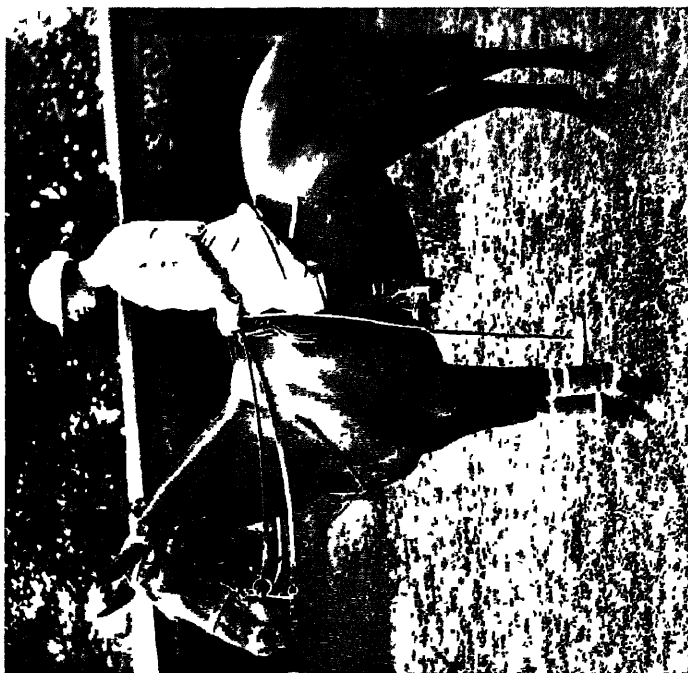
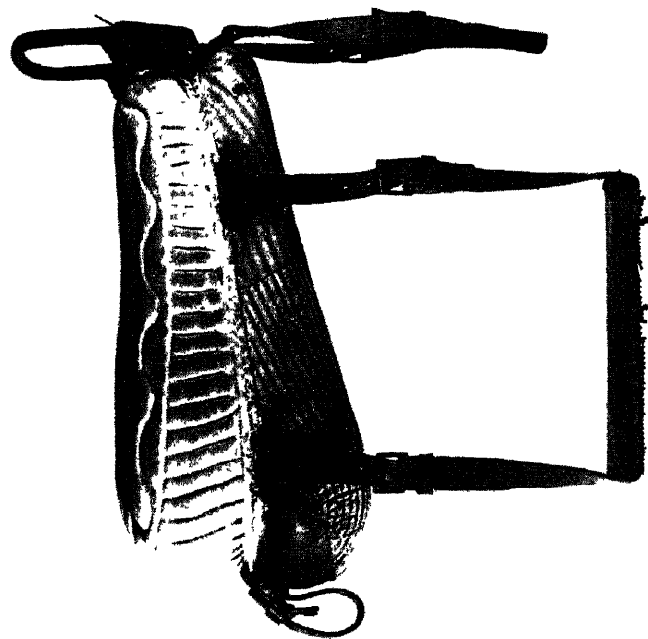
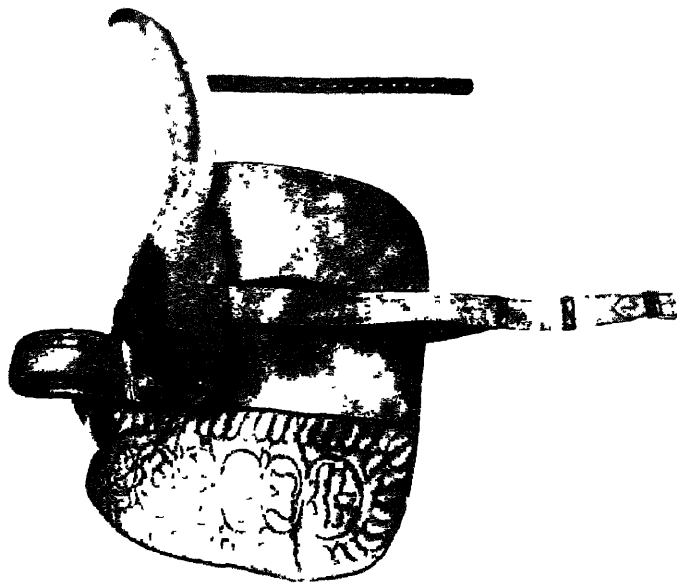


Photo Sport & General
SIDE-SADDLE OR ASTRIDE—TWO HARD ONES TO BEAT
Miss Lexie Hinton, one of the best women to ride astride, across T. H. Hinton's, and possibly the best in England at the difficult art of getting a moderate horse over that big country, and always with bounds



A "pillion" saddle of about 1800, which was attached by straps to the back of a man's saddle. The rider put her feet on the foot-rest and hung on the iron rail and her male escort's belt!



By kind permission of Messrs Chantreton and Wilton
Side-saddle made in 1860 for the Countess of Salisbury, first lady M F H (see Plate 6)

had been always used. At first this was always a leather "slipper," till about the beginning of the nineteenth century the Countess of Salisbury, M.F.H., and a few others, used the new spring bar and safety stirrup. (See Plate 13.)

Marie Antoinette in 1778 used a saddle without a lower pommel, which had a stirrup-iron instead of a slipper.

(NOTE.—The original order, dated November 14th, 1788, for a hunting side-saddle for Lady Salisbury, can be seen in Messrs. Champion and Wilton's book to-day, 457 Oxford Street. Judging by the measurements she was a largeish lady, and it is interesting to note that "the charge for sending a foreman to Hatfield to measure the mare Delia was 7s. 6d. 1") (See Plate 6.)

Many ladies of that period continued to use the "slipper" stirrup sewn to the stirrup leather, which went over the roller bar on the near side of the saddle, round the horse's girth to a strap on the off-side, and this method more or less continued until the latter part of the last century, when several saddlemakers adopted various forms of safety bars.

THE MODERN SIDE-SADDLE

It is generally wiser to get your saddle from one of the best London firms (see Appendix II), because they have years of experience, a reputation to keep up, and experts at your service. The second-hand value is always better, they have stocks of trees in hand, they are always willing to send fitters out to a customer, and the usual experience is that few local saddlers are able to make a nice-looking, strong and light side-saddle fit satisfactorily.

A good saddle may last for years.

An experienced horsewoman is a great help to the novice in choosing her saddle, and she can rely on sound advice from the first-class firm. She will be asked whether she likes the "straight seat" or the "old-fashioned." The "straight seat" is designed to get the weight of the rider as far forward as possible and with her riding "long" as compared to the

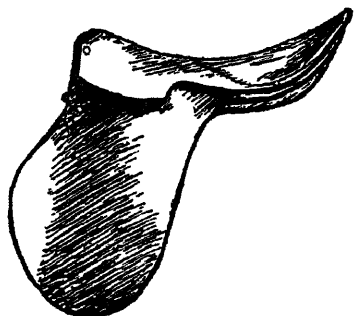
saddle in vogue thirty years ago, which had an up-hill seat and pummels placed close together, compelling a cramped seat and a short leather, with the weight far back on the horse's back.

The novice, if she is not yet very sure of herself, may be advised to experiment with two or three trial saddles of various shapes before definitely committing herself to a new saddle, always a slippery thing when new at the best of times!

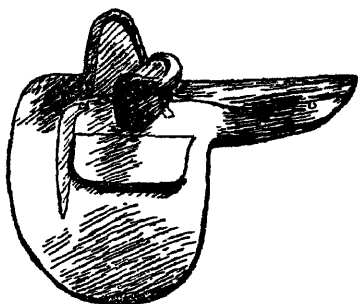
The *moderately* "straight" seat which puts the weight nicely forward, with the left leg pommel low, and a stirrup long enough for a supple, graceful carriage, but short enough to be practical, is an ideal saddle for hunting. In it you can have a firm hunting seat and good balance, enabling you to hound-jog comfortably for miles, and spend a whole day in the saddle with ease, which would have been impossible in the saddles made thirty to fifty years ago. (See Plate 13.)

The novice is advised against the *ultra-straight* saddle, with its dead flat seat. Such a saddle may be nice for show purposes, as it makes you appear to sit so straight, but unless you are hunting a very perfectly schooled horse, never likely to do the wrong thing at any time—buck, flounder on a bank, swerve or peck—the novice will not have the same security or control as on a medium seat. One has seen fine horsewomen decanted quite easily from a show saddle out hunting, though, of course, the type of horse makes a world of difference, and, to a certain extent, the type of country. It would be impossible for the average rider to sit perched up on a very straight-seated saddle over an Irish bank, and not easy to jump a Beaufortshire wall at the correct trot! Which, of course, does not mean that you should adopt the other extreme—the old-fashioned soup-plate sort of seat, the only advantage of which was perhaps that the rider was nearer the back of her horse giving her a greater sense of control.

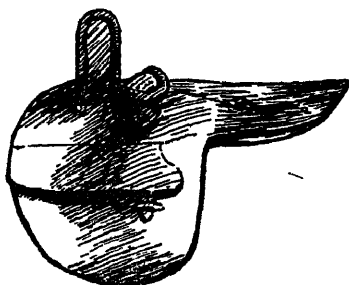
"Moderation in all things"—a seat straight enough to keep the weight forward, yet with a little bit of saddle to sit "in" as well as "on," comfortably able to grip with the right thigh at all speeds, and the left leg nicely balanced in a moderate length iron, is the sort of saddle the novice is advised to buy



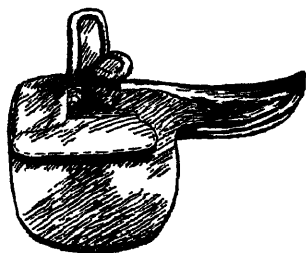
Astride saddle
(Whippy).



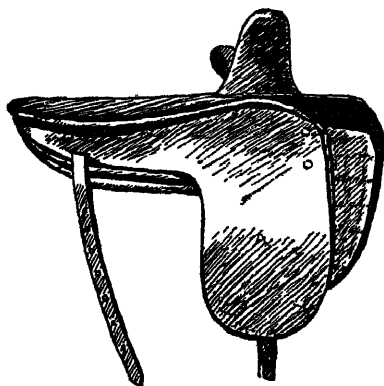
Whippy's straight-seated side
saddle, 1932.



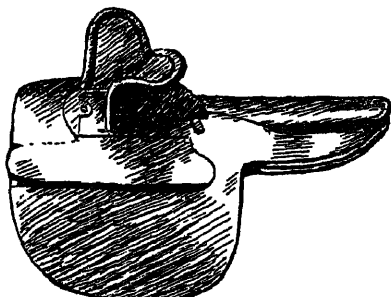
Whippy's side-saddle,
1932.



Medium-seated side saddle
(Champion and Wilton)



1932, Flat-seat side saddle (Champion and Wilton)



for serious hunting. You do want to get a feel of your horse all the time.

The extra long leather may look nice, or it may look over-balanced; it depends on the woman and her mount. The novice is advised to avoid the over-long leg as, especially during a lengthy trot, the extra leverage is apt to work the saddle on the horse's back, possibly leading to "scalds" behind the saddle.

The saddler will want to know what shaped pummels. The novice may suit herself—again largely a personal matter. The woman with a well-covered thigh may find small narrow pummels quite comfortable; another may need them softly padded with buckskin. Some like them close together and others well apart. Ourselves, we do not like flat three-corner-shaped, broad ones, but as with the manner of holding the reins the shape of pummels is much what one gets accustomed to.

We do not like any padding under the leather where the right leg presses against the horse's shoulder, as one can then "feel" the horse so much better.

It is, of course, essential to have a stirrup with a safety bar and catch to prevent any possibility of the rider being dragged.

The saddle may be lined with :

- (1) Linen, which is cool and easily scrubbed clean.
- (2) Leather, which looks nice and lasts longer without re-lining. (A little vaseline rubbed in will keep it soft and supple.)
- (3) Flannel felt, which is absorbent to sweat.

GIRTHS may be of leather, single or folded, also of webbing with the outer strap of leather, and it is best for hunting to choose a type of saddle on which it is easy for you to pull up your girths while on the horse.

(NOTE.—Racing girths which have elastic at the ends are designed to give the horse plenty of liberty to expand his lungs when galloping.)

A BALANCE strap is generally used by English hunting-women to help keep the saddle steady for up- and down-hill

work and long trots, but it is not necessary on certain horses or for ordinary riding. Some horses do not like it, particularly if fastened up too tightly. If too loose it may slip back and turn your horse into a bucking broncho, or even get caught up in the latch of a gate! You should instruct your groom to always put the balance strap through the loop of your martingale into the girths which prevents it slipping back. (See page 205.)

Having settled the type of side-saddle, and had yourself measured, the next and most important thing is to get the saddler to measure all your horses so as to select the most suitable tree to fit them. The "tree" is the steel foundation of the saddle which is built up on a wooden frame and then covered with best pigskin cut to shape, carefully padded and stuffed by hand with finest wool and lined. It is important that the *tree* itself should be a rough fit on the horse's back just behind the withers where the chief pressure of a modern side-saddle comes; a saddle not fitting here is the cause of most back troubles. You cannot put a "wide-fitting" tree on a narrow-withered horse and vice versa, but a good saddler can pad up the tree which is a rough fit and make it fit comfortably. A "general fitting tree" is best for a single saddle, but the shape of withers and backs vary so enormously with individual horses that if you are going to do a lot of serious hunting on all sorts of horses it is unlikely that one or even two saddles can be made to answer all requirements; you may need a narrow-fitting, a wide, and a medium saddle. But it is quite possible that a good groom and a clever saddler will make one or two saddles fit a fairly level stud of five or six horses. You may be able to keep an old saddle to fit one special horse with a difficult back.

You can have an extra soft seat to your saddle if you wish it.

It is necessary to have a WATERPROOF COVER to fit over each saddle if your horse will be led to the Meet. Nothing is more uncomfortable than getting on a wet saddle to start the day.

It is not wise to let your second horseman ride sideways in your side-saddle, unless he is a very light weight. It is better

to get a special pad to go over it on which he can ride quietly astride or, better still, arrange to change saddles or have your horse led home. And second horsemen are mostly better not allowed to ride in spurs.

SIDE-SADDLE SEAT

Having acquired a saddle that is comfortable to the rider and well-fitting to the horse we must sit in it to the best of our ability. The great things to remember are :

(1) Sit straight and square and upright, with your weight evenly distributed and looking straight between your horse's ears. Your left shoulder will probably need to come forward a trifle.

(2) Ride always with your left leg straight and well forward out of your horse's flank, and particularly when actually jumping and landing over a fence. *Never* let it go back if you can help it.

(3) Do not hunch the shoulders in an ugly fashion, nor let the elbows flap about.

Within the limits prescribed by individual make and shape, the rider should sit getting her weight as far forward as possible (the ideal position for a horse to carry weight is two and a half inches behind his withers), the left leg straight or nearly straight downwards, and the left foot parallel to the ground, rather forward and turned outwards and away from her horse's sides ; as is well illustrated by Plates 26 and 27 of Lady Blanche Douglas. (Someone used to constantly riding in a spur would probably keep her left leg rather straighter downwards from the knee in line with the girths and less turned outwards.) (See Plate 14.)

It will be noticed that Lady Blanche gets well forward and is beautifully balanced, maintaining her grip with the thighs and to a certain extent with the back of the calf. In this seat the weight comes on the horse in much the same place as it would if riding astride in a cross-saddle. She is exceptionally strong on a horse with perfect hands which, combined with

her strong seat, make her practically undefeatable on all kinds of horses. This may be said to be the ideal seat for a small or medium-sized woman. Someone rather taller or longer in the thighs will naturally have to sit a bit farther back, another may have to grip the right pommel rather closer to the knee than she does, but do not grip with the crook of the knee—the thigh is so much firmer and stronger.

The grip on a side-saddle is maintained almost entirely by the right leg, as is quickly realized if one chances to break that pommel, or the horse moves on whilst one is getting on before the right leg is round ! So keep your right leg firm on the saddle against your horse's shoulder and have as little padding there as possible so as to be able to "feel him."

Balance and seat depend on the right pommel except when a horse is pulling rather hard or galloping very fast when the left leg is stretched slightly more forward, heel down, bringing the left thigh firm against the left pommel. If he kicks, pecks on landing, etc., the extra grip comes in like a vice.

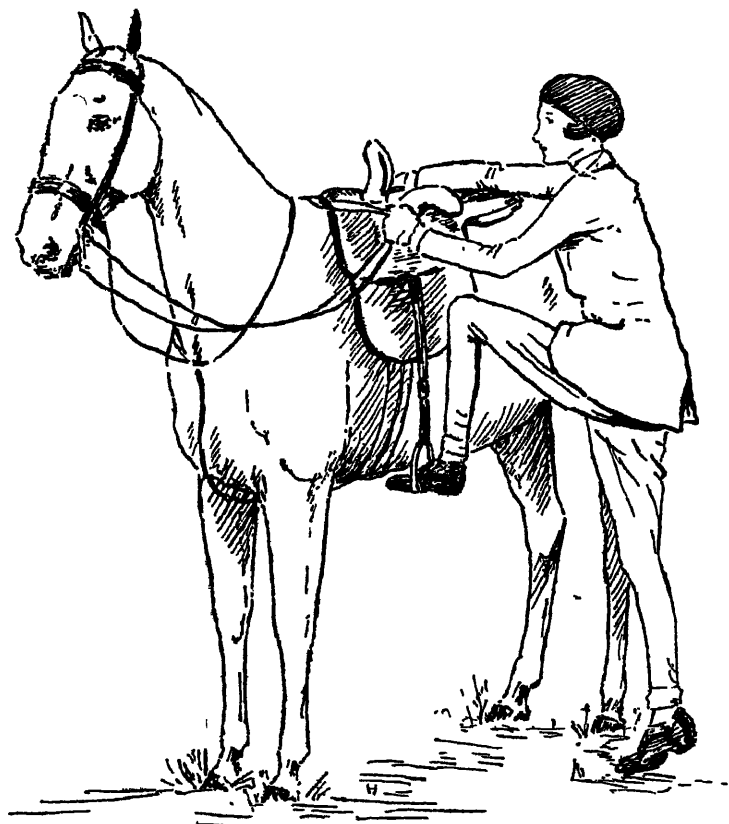
The left knee should come two or three inches below the left pommel. The right foot should remain in a natural position (see Plate 14), the toe should not point downwards.

The old-fashioned side-saddle, with its knee grip, forced the rider's weight back, but the modern grip with the thighs puts the weight some six inches further forward. At full gallop one can slide forward a trifle more, even at times slightly standing in the stirrup.

A safety stirrup is necessary. The kind in which the leather comes away from the saddle is the best, but it must have a fairly strong spring or is apt to come too easily. Nothing is more annoying than to lose your place in a good hunt because your horse jumped badly, up flew your leg and away went your iron.

On such an occasion how many women can jump off, replace their iron and get on again unaided ? The only reason is generally that they have never learnt how to mount from the ground, and we strongly advise every woman to practise ; it adds enormously to one's confidence and pleasure in the

hunting-field to be able to get on and off without assistance, other perhaps than another rider holding one's horse's head to prevent him walking on. With practice it is easy, but unless one is tall it is difficult at first to jump up on sixteen-hand horses. A side-saddle is considerably more difficult than a



GETTING ON—SIDE-SADDLE

1. Stepping up.

man's saddle, as one cannot take hold with the left hand either of the horse's withers or the tree of the saddle, it is also higher up, and any hanging on may pull the saddle over.

MOUNTING SIDE-SADDLE

One way is to get on as much as possible like a man, holding the reins in the left hand and swinging the right leg

right over. This is clumsy with a habit skirt and it is difficult not to pull the saddle over unless one can take advantage of high ground.

A better way is as follows : the reins should be held in the right hand which firmly grips the off-side of the saddle-seat. Standing close but rather at right angles to the horse, put the left foot in the stirrup, left hand firmly on the top pommel



2. Twisting right leg over pummels.

close to the saddle, then lightly and quickly transfer your weight to the left side of the body and you rise by straightening the left knee. The secret is to get your weight over the saddle by leaning the head and body forward and pressing the left knee in close to the horse. It is useless hopping about on the right foot miles away from the horse, as you sometimes see people doing. As far as possible, as it were, *step up* into the saddle, quickly, easily, without touching the horse with your toe, or hanging in the air. A little twist

in mid-air puts your right leg round the pummel in one motion.

With practice, and someone just to hold the horse's head, the knack is soon acquired. The easiest way to start is from a mounting-block, then from a pony, but practise from the beginning getting quickly and easily and lightly into the saddle. You should, of course, take advantage of any higher bit of ground and make the horse stand still.

Some grooms are excellent at giving "a leg up." The idea is to use a pair of hands like a step in order to save time and a possibility of pulling the saddle round. Stand parallel facing your horse (see Plate 15). On no account should it be necessary for him or your men friends to heave you into the saddle like a ton of coals! A firm grip of your boot by the sole as you hop off the right toe with a straight left leg, is all that one needs to give the required lift. The groom can stop the horse moving on by putting his left arm through one rein (see Plate 15).

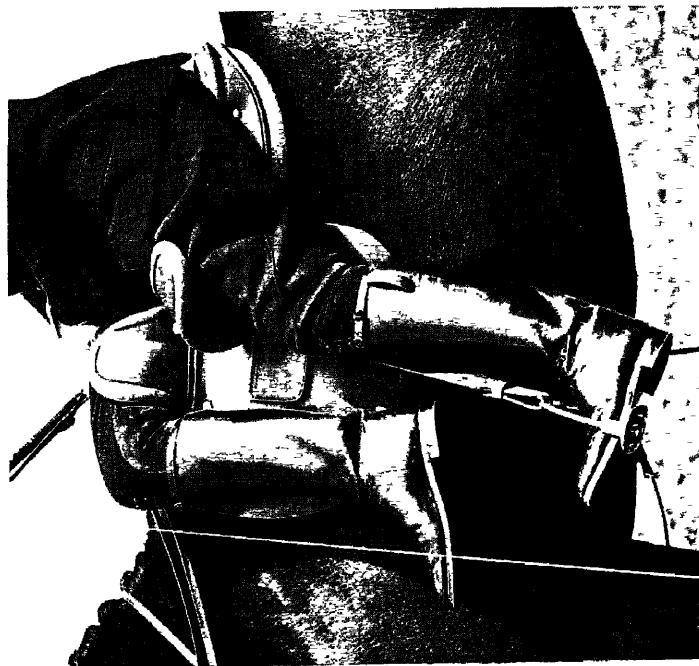
THE PREVENTION OF SORE BACKS

A sore back may take weeks to get right if it is neglected. Besides upsetting a horse's temper, causing him to kick and bite at other horses, and being a source of great pain, it is impossible to ride him, in that saddle anyhow, until it is quite well.

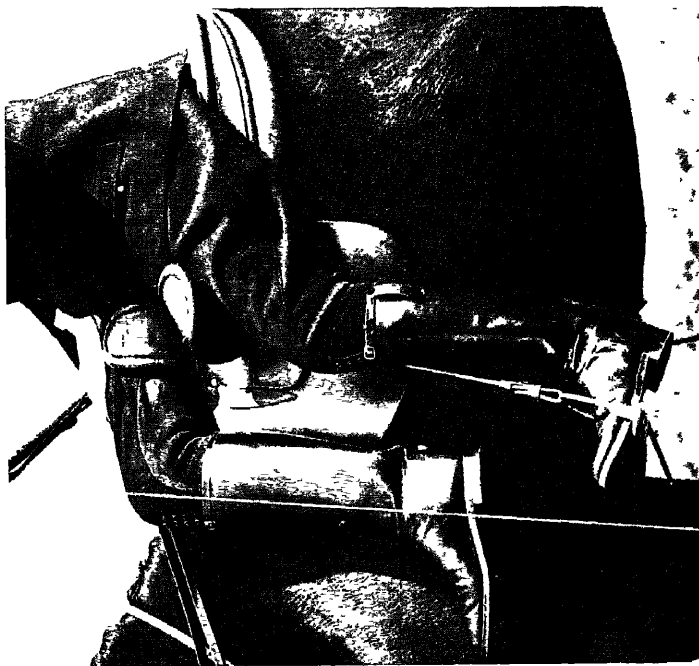
A saddle properly fitting the horse practically entirely eliminates the danger of "backs," but the novice will be unable to tell for herself whether her saddle fits, and few grooms are good judges, and indeed few men, unless they have had a lot of experience with side-saddles.

If you have any trouble or suspicion of a "back" after having the saddle fitted and made by a first-class saddler, it is best to send for him again to see the saddle on the horse at once. He will probably add or take away a bit of stuffing and put it right.

Most backs are caused by friction—the saddle rolling about and rubbing off layer after layer of skin if neglected.



On a "Medium" Scatch Saddle
Showing the correct position of both legs The white line comes in the same place on the horse's shoulder and shows how in (2) the rider is further forward



Photos W. D. Moss

THE SIDE-SADDLE SEAT

On a "Straight" Scatch Saddle

PLATE 15

3

2

1



Cinema photo W D Moss

6

5

4

THE RIGHT WAY TO GIVE A "LEG-UP" SIDE-SADDLE

Look at your horses' backs yourself occasionally the day after hunting, with the rugs off and from both sides. They should be cool and smooth to touch. Lightly run your fingers over each back where the saddle comes and if the horse flinches at all, or there is heat, a lump, or hair off, the place must be attended to without delay, as a small place neglected will lead to a big one and every sort of trouble from a saddle gall.

Side-saddles have to be constantly watched. For one thing, as they get older they tend to go down on the horses' backs and require restuffing. Then horses alter, old horses tending to get hollow in their backs. At the beginning of a hunting season all horses are big in condition, which they lose after three months' regular hunting, particularly in the case of those that are not good doers. It is worth the expense to restuff any saddle which may not be fitting so well with a horse gone lighter instead of risking pinching or rubbing his withers.

More women rub their horses' withers than their backs. It is easy to "scald" a horse's back (under the back edge of the saddle) when he is unfit and "soft," particularly on a warm day, or if he gets very hot; but this should never occur when he is fit and hard.

Horses likely to carry a lady's saddle should be led to exercise in one when being got fit in September and October.

"Backs" are largely the fault of ignorant, lazy, or thoughtless grooms.

A side-saddle should never be moved for at least twenty minutes after the horse has come in from hunting, in order to let the back cool down slowly, and not to remove the pressure too suddenly; it is better not even to touch the girths. If, on removing the saddle, there should be dark patches of sweat, it is well to rub in methylated spirit (provided, of course, there is no skin off) and replace saddle for a quarter of an hour; again remove it and repeat, if still any wet places showing. This is an excellent remedy as a preventive, and should always be used if a side-saddle is put on a horse that is accustomed only to a man's saddle: the last two inches, being unused to

the longer saddle, are most apt to "scald" through no fault of the rider. Boracic powder sprinkled in is good—also a little salt and water sponged on every day helps to harden the skin, as does whiting shaken up in a bottle of vinegar and well rubbed into the hair. For a place that has unfortunately got bad a preparation of zinc ointment, lead lotion and olive oil is cool and soothing and helps the tissues to re-form. It is imperative for the wound to heal from the bottom upwards, otherwise a hard crust forms on the top with pus underneath, which will result in an abscess and all sorts of trouble. Of course, the horse should be cooled down and not hunted in a saddle that touches the spot until it is completely cured.

It is important to leave a saddle-mark for a side-saddle when the horses are clipped; and in order to make a good job your groom should put each horse's saddle on him and clip round it, so ensuring that the saddle-mark is the correct shape, size, and place.

No woman, however well she rides, can avoid pinching her horse's withers if a saddle with a narrow tree is put on a horse with wide withers, and vice versa.

Mud got in under the saddle and rubbed into the hot skin by friction while hunting is likely to give a back.

If in spite of all this care a rub appears both sides of the withers, the cause is probably a broken tree. Trees break sometimes unaccountably, and the only way to be certain is for the saddler to strip the saddle and have a look. After a bad fall with the horse rolling about on the ground the tree is likely to get broken, of course, but it more often happens from careless grooms putting the saddle where it can get knocked down or leaving it ungirthed, loose on the horse's back in the stables so that he has shaken it off, or even rolled on it! Trees put on all sorts of horses are apt to "spread" after much use and go down on a horse's back.

One should never forget that a horse by nature is most ill-adapted for carrying weights on his back, having an unprotected backbone, floating ribs with no support other than muscular between his withers and his hips where all the weight

comes. One must do all possible to increase the power of the back muscles while taking all direct pressure off the backbone ; this being the reason a saddle-tree is made softly padded to fit on either side of the backbone, and well arched for an air passage down the centre in order to keep the skin as cool as possible.

Some horses have such thin skins that it is almost impossible to avoid touching them. If so, and they are excellent in every way, one should try a numnah, a stout piece of felt under the saddle, but be sure it is large enough and cannot shift. A numnah made of sheepskin with the wool side to the horse is excellent, but it needs very careful cleaning and drying after use. (It is best cleaned with hot flour rubbed into it and well beaten out.)

“Scalds” behind the saddle are not so difficult to deal with as any sore on the withers. A man’s saddle can be used till the place is well. A clean linen “rubber” should always be kept between any sort of “back” and the somewhat scratchy horse blanket, or the irritation may put a horse off his feed.

It is wise to rest your horse’s back when you can, by having him led on to the Meet, getting off after a hard gallop when hounds are marking to ground. You yourself should always make certain that the saddle is well put on and girthed up. It should sit just behind the withers ; and you should be able to slide your hand under the saddle on either side of the withers, when you are sitting on the horse’s back. Girthing up is very important. Some grooms are apt to girth much too tightly. The skin should never look wrinkled or pinched, but the girths should always be firm ; and it is well to try them now and again to see that they are all right. One can generally take them up a hole after one has been on a horse for an hour or two, so it is important to have a saddle on which pulling up the girths is easy. If there is no time to get off after a sharp gallop, it eases the horse if you turn his head to the breeze and let the girths out a hole while you sit *quietly* on his back. (But don’t let him go eating grass or twigs as one sometimes

sees—not only does it look sloppy, but it is not a kindness to the horse as his half-chewed rubbish is sure to stick somewhere and stop him in his gallop.)

Girth galls are a nuisance on some horses—a piece of lamb's wool may save the skin from chafing, or you can use a divided girth.

This all sounds as if side-saddles are terribly difficult to keep right and that "backs" are almost impossible to avoid. This is not so if a little trouble is taken by the rider and her groom. A good horsewoman goes season after season without a back of any serious description whatever.

CHAPTER V

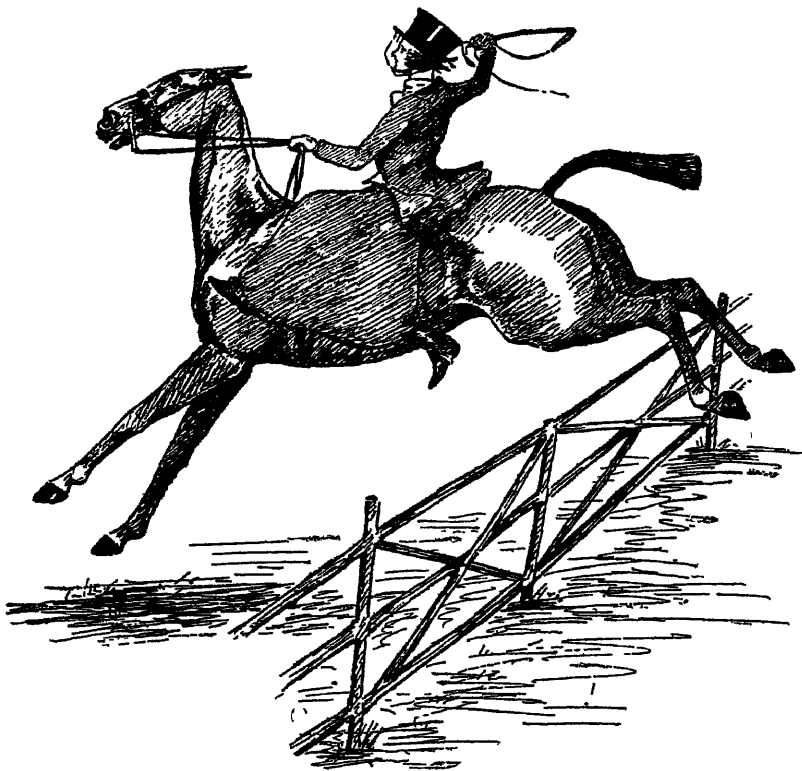
A NOVICE GOES HUNTING

“ We are enjoying ourselves here very much, hunting every day.”
(Letter from Beatrice d’Este to her sister.)

THERE is nothing more exciting than a day with a strange pack of hounds to someone who has not hunted very much. Every big Hunt has a crowd of strangers, and every day most provincial Hunts have a few, but just how many of the hard-riding, well turned-out, quick, keen judges of horseflesh, the “ top sawyers ” as our grandfathers called them, consider for a moment the small fry that hangs around outside covert, too modest to come near, too ignorant to do the right thing, appallingly turned out, the perpetrators of the worst hunting iniquities. One doubts if the great Captain X noticed the clumsy lad on a raw-boned chestnut, save to think “ why doesn’t the fellow take his carcase off his horse for a minute ? ” Mrs. Little’s keen eyes note the disordered veil, the scarlet face, and the foolishness of riding at an impossible pace the opposite way to which hounds are running, but born and bred with stable straw, as it were, in her mouth, she cannot appreciate the agony of the novice trying so hard but failing in everything connected with this her first essay at hunting. The dormant instincts of hunting may be hidden in a generation or two of shooting, London, or seafaring ancestors ; the first few chances, and how everything is so apt to be wrong ; boots too short, breeches wrong colour, habit fitting very badly and a wrong saddle. Hat too big or too small, no idea how to keep the bun on short hair, or that hair could possibly get so untidy, gloves too tight or slipping—yet the donning of these clothes, still unconscious of their shortcomings, is sufficient to make her late for breakfast and too flustered she eats practically nothing

in the effort to be punctual at the Meet. Yet the twang of the horn is sweet music to the mind and galloping hooves bring tears of pleasure to the eyes.

The effort to get mounted and to keep out of the crowd ends in seeing our little stranger jogging along in the rear of the merry throng, possibly the veil already giving trouble, or



A bad rider and badly turned out.

her reins catching in the sandwich case attached to her saddle. (How is it that novices almost invariably, whatever else they may omit, always seem to fit their saddles with sandwich cases?) One will see little of her at the interesting stages of the day, but one is sure to see her fumbling with her veil outside covert, moving on when hounds are casting, dropping her whip in a muddy lane and certainly letting a gate bang on others!

Everyone has to start as a novice of some kind, and novices are the backbone of hunting, what only matters is how long one stays in this class. Some females, one regrets to say, show novice symptoms all their hunting lives—veils, crop dropping, gate slamming, and the rest for ever, while others in a short time become Queens of the Hunting-field and the wives of Masters of Hounds !

Disliking a long list of "Don'ts," let us have an imaginary day in an imaginary country and take an imaginary novice along with us.

First, she must be feeling her best. Some attain this by an easy day before, some by an early bed, or hard exercise, and others by dancing all night. One commends the method found by practise to be most efficacious to the individual and we want her to get up in the morning fresh and hearty, rushing at the window with half-open eyes to look at the weather. We know what sweet torture it is to lie awake all night, too excited to sleep in anticipation of the morrow ! One commends to the novice the croaker's soother, that anticipation is often the better fun, or the idea that there may be frost, or snow, or no scent, or someone may die and the Meet will be cancelled !

Anyhow, she will rise betimes to put on good strong, light woolly underwear, covering the base of the neck downwards. Silk is not good alone. It is unbelievable how cold one can get and a souse in a brook is not beyond the bounds of possibility, as our novice has seen herself leaping canals and flying fences in the van in imagination.

Our novice turns up at breakfast not at all badly turned out in her boots, breeches, and shirt with a cardigan jacket and a gay silk handkerchief knotted round her neck, as it is easier to put a tie on after one's hat is secured. Some of our mothers used to breakfast before hunting with their hats and hunting-stocks on, but nowadays we are not obliged to make ourselves uncomfortable for appearances. A substantial breakfast and everything arranged so as not to have a rush. You can't hang over the new *Tatler* and remember all the little things that add

to comfort on a long day. An extra safety-pin, a bar of hunting-chocolate, a compressed bandage, a few sixpences and shillings to give to people who may chance to open a gate or hold a horse, a large handkerchief, a ten-shilling note (in case you have to reward someone for restoring you to your mount), a cheque for your "Cap," a small map of the country, a watch, a spare pair of woolly gloves, a spare veil (if you wear one)—you should think of these and stow them carefully in pockets, inside and out. Whip in hand with five minutes to spare and an overcoat you are in the hall ready.

A drizzling day, people fuss about mackintoshes, don't bother yourself, they are a nuisance, side-saddle or astride (unless the day is an absolute soaker with a cold wind blowing), and, anyhow, the glass is rising. The only thing you might do is to wear a pair of woollen gloves to prevent the wet reins slipping and to keep your hands warm. We will skip the drive to the Meet—you will probably be feeling very excited and apprehensive on viewing the strange large fences and huge ditches, probably finding yourself impossible places to jump alongside the roads. You will be wise to use the time instead, asking your host and hostess about the country and the people, the coverts likely to be drawn, and it is a good thing in a strange country to know the names of the "good people to hounds." If you know their names you can always find someone who can point them out to you, and it will save you losing a Hunt probably if you keep one of their backs in view. We hear on this occasion that Captain X, old Mr. Smith, and Mrs. Little are all star performers, while young Crashum is the most daring and goes like a blind fool. Apparently Captain X is always up at the end of a hunt and always in front, old Mr. Smith knows every lane, byway and gap and is always there while seldom jumping anything out of a trot, and Mrs. Little weighing a feather-weight on a big horse goes very nearly as straight as Captain X and is nearly as knowledgeable about the country as Mr. Smith.

Thus we begin to arrive. We have been quietly passing on the road "bang-tailed" horses with plaited manes in twos

and threes for some time, which give a thrill to our provincial breast where plaited manes are regarded either as rather swank or as denoting someone with a horse to sell ! Horses, cars, foot people, bicycles, are all converging towards a little stone-built village at the bottom of a hill. Our host has timed it just right, hounds are just arriving, and we have ten minutes to find our horse and get comfortable in the saddle.

It is to be hoped you have your own horse, or perhaps your host is mounting you on a good hunter used to the country. Also that you have your own saddle, but it is more important for the horse to be comfortable than you, so if you are riding side-saddle on a strange horse it is better to let the stud-groom decide and to leave the details entirely to him. Only it is well to see that your girths are tight, yet without undue constriction to pinch the horse. If you are riding a hireling you must look him over carefully, and see if he is wearing bandages, that they are firmly on, that the bridle is not pulled up too high in his mouth, that the curb is lying in the right place on the chin groove, and be quite sure you know the arrangements for giving up the horse at the end of the day, as it is a shame that even a hireling should be kept from his tea and his rest any longer than needs must be. Remember that no good horse remains a hireling, but that all hirelings have one good point at least or they would not remain hirelings. One has never known a hireling that could not *either* gallop, or jump, or look after himself, but it is most unlikely he can do all these and be sound, so if you are on a hireling you must generally ride to hireling plan and do your best within prescribed limits. Most hirelings are brutes in the rear of a Hunt, but if you can get them alongside hounds they will burst gallant old hearts and forget shaky old legs in the effort to stay there. With hounds running and his blood up, you may put your hireling at a gate which he will certainly try to jump, but attempt the same manœuvre in the rear, which one has seen people do, and your intelligent mount will most certainly refuse !

“Hounds, gentlemen, please,” and we are off, trotting down the village street a long line of scarlet and black, a most brave

sight. Many of your friends are greeting you, which is nice, but don't dally with them too long, as already the business has begun. Find out now Captain X, Mr. Smith, and Mrs. Little; if you don't know them by sight, someone will be only too glad to point them out to you a stranger. People in the hunting-field are with few exceptions very kind to strange girls, and full of advice as to the local obstacles, rivers, and pitfalls, but don't tarry discussing them in the rear of the cavalcade, edge yourself up to where you can see the great three trotting quietly along behind the Master. As your destiny will be closely linked, take a good view of their backs and also be sure you will know the Master. A ten minutes' jog and we turn off the high road into a bylane. Here you will probably see the Secretary looking out for strangers to "cap." Don't circumvent him, as some people appear to take a delight in doing, but go up and proffer your inadequate remuneration for a whole day's concentrated pleasure. Compared to other things, a day's hunting is cheap and costs less than a dinner for two at an expensive restaurant. Handed the correct sum, the harassed Secretary will bless you and will quite likely later look you out, introduce you to people or help you about arrangements for getting home. "Caps" off their minds all Hunt Secretaries are very nice folk!

The lane ends in a grass field, and we let our horse go into a quiet canter. If he is a stranger this is the time to get a feel of him. It is to be hoped he feels big and strong under you, yet does not pull at your hands. Let him have a little rein, but look out for bucks, and whatever you do don't get carried into hounds and start the day with a black mark against you from the Master!

Another field or two is crossed and the first covert is reached. We watch hounds being put in while the Master takes up a position near a gate. Don't go day-dreaming, conversing with friends, or riding aimlessly about, but keep as near to that gate as you can with your three pilots in view and stand quietly, unless it is too cold for your horse. Look out for kickers in the gateway, and don't invite trouble so early

in the day by allowing your horse to browse off his neighbour's tail ! Possibly you are of the phlegmatic type, but more probably your heart is going pit-a-pat and your fingers are tingling with excitement while you try to listen above the chatter going on around you as the big Field collects round the gate. You find yourself being edged out of your place, but suddenly there is a heart-raising cry, a hallo-away from the other end, and at the same time a crash of music from the wood as hounds open. "A good scent," the obvious remark is echoed round. "Look out !" "Take care !" "Don't come near me !"—a wild scramble round the gate as the Master holds up the Field while hounds come tumbling out of covert. Of course, you find yourself behind a horse with a red kicker's ribbon on his tail ; in moving someone else edges in and takes your place, another red ribbon and another ! Oh dear, you have lost sight of Captain X and all of them, the gate swings open and the pent-up Field pours in a mass of scarlet and black into the great green pastures of the Shires. "Hold hard, gentlemen !" thunders the Master. Hounds are cramming through the further fence ; the huntsman blowing his horn in soul-stirring music, the second whip cheering on the couple of hounds racing to catch up the others. You *must* wait for them, they are Patience and Saintly, who pushed their delicate noses into that thick patch of brambles in covert and put up our fox for us, taking a little longer to get out of covert than the others. "Get on to him !" *crack* goes the whipper-in, "'Ware hounds !" It is to be hoped you know for certain that your horse does not kick hounds, but if you are on a hireling you may take it for granted that he does, whatever the man in charge may have said to the contrary ; anyhow, always keep away from hounds on a strange horse, and if hounds unavoidably come your way, keep his head towards them, and his heels as far away as you can.

This slight pause has given us a chance to see our pilots, and as we surge on again we have a brief vision of Captain X disappearing over a large post and rails at right-angles to us, and Mrs. Little next to the huntsman jumping what now

appears to be the only place in a very forbidding fence. We are nowhere in the large queue forming up at the gap, our strange horse is pulling, uncertain we turn and catch sight of Mr. Smith galloping along to the gate. We have just time to catch him, and with a string of four or five others we find ourselves single file in an unmercilessly wet muddy lane, where the splash from the horse in front covers us with thick blobs of yellow mud. After what seems ages, we turn right-handed into a field, where we view a red coat disappearing over a stile. Mr. Smith pulls up to a trot, pushes his horse up a bank, into what looks like impenetrable thicket, and the whole thing dissolves into a few trails of brambles through which the rest of us walk. On we go, another big fence in front, Mr. Smith rides straight for a piece of timber in the far corner, our first jump, but what a big one! He pulls up dead, takes hold of the top rail, which falls down and leaves an easy three feet, which his horse bucks over followed by the rest of us one by one. "Let's listen," he says, and at that moment we hear the horn in the distance. The next minute a black and white tumbled mass pours into the far corner of our field, the hounds with no one with them! "Can't get that way," says Mr. Smith, and wheels back over our bit of timber, which is now reduced to one rail, scatters up the hedge side to a crazy gate which he manages to open enough for us each to squeeze through behind him. Swing up your leg out of the way of the post and we are now back in our muddy lane, down which we pound for what seems eternity. "Making for the old quarry," says Mr. Smith, and he turns off right-handed again, flings open a gate and makes for the far corner of a big field. Here we see a man with a cart of manure holding his hat. "Fox gone by here five minutes," he says. "Not our fox," snorts Mr. Smith. "How's the missus?" he added over his shoulder. The man answers, "Doing fine, thank 'ee." "He's taken down his wire this season," explains Mr. Smith, as we gallop on, and to our delight we see a red coat bobbing along in front and hear the hounds. "No hurry," says Mr. Smith, "he's in the quarry for a cert." At the next fence Mr. Smith stops to pull

out a stake and we all follow him over, probably not feeling brave enough to tackle any place on our own, and we see in the farther corner hounds snuffing round an old quarry and the huntsman getting off his horse. We trot up to see people arriving from all quarters of the compass. Captain X and Mrs. Little are there standing beside their horses, which look nearly as fresh as ours, but most people's are wet and lathered looking, as if they had galloped for miles. "Fourteen minutes over the worst line of country," we hear the Master saying, and we look round to thank Mr. Smith, but see him talking to the huntsman about the possibilities of getting the fox out. If possible we might get off our horse for a few minutes, it is well to rest his back whenever one can. Yes, there is a farm boy who, for one of those spare shillings in our pocket, will certainly hold our horse.

We are feeling a little disappointed at this, our first experience of a crack country, but the Secretary who has just trotted up on a very clean horse comes over to us and says, "Not a very good sample of our country, I fear, but we are now going to Sandy Gorse, which is the best covert in the country and we are bound to have a hunt. You seem to have picked up some mud," he remarks, and we become aware of our well-spotted tie that we had been so proud of tying this morning.

Hounds are now moving off and with the farm-boy holding our horse we should be able to get back into the saddle without pulling it over and out of place, and we trot on after hounds, leaving a large crowd looking for second horses, talking and laughing, and discussing adventures. Having been at considerable pains for this day's hunting, we are determined not to be left this time and push on forward, at the same time taking care not to take more out of our horse than is necessary, as every ounce may be wanted later.

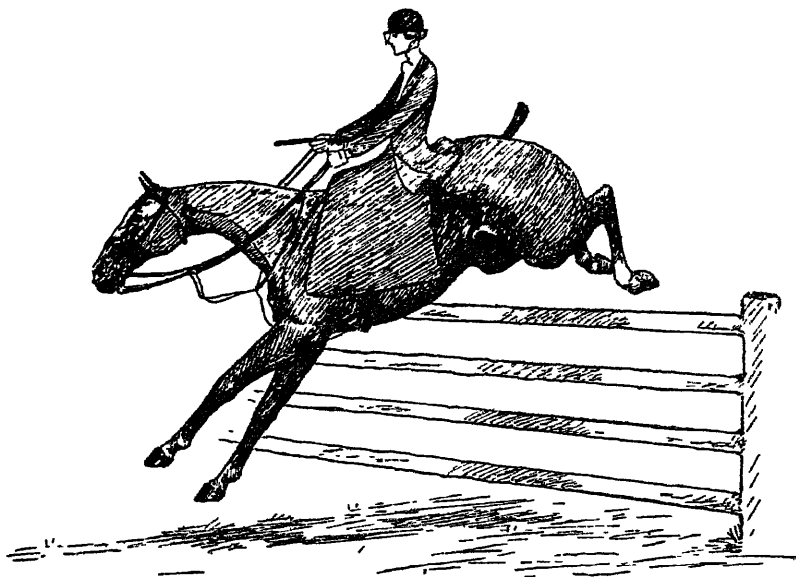
Sandy Gorse reached, much the same procedure is gone through, but we note instead of crowding into the gate with the Master, Mrs. Little and a few others are standing a little out of the crowd to the right. We see Mrs. Little pulling up her

girths, so we look at ours and find that they are a bit slack and we take them up a hole. We now hear Captain X saying that with this wind we are sure to run straight to the hills, and we know from our map that this should be across the cream of the famous Vale. At this moment there is a whimper from the gorse, another and another. A distant scream from the second whipper-in. We see the fox, quietest figure in the play, stealing down wind across our front. "Another minute, please," says the Master as hounds come streaming out of the gorse and as the gate opens we have a quick vision of Captain X jumping the rails on the right and of Mrs. Little further down putting her horse at the fence, whilst the great majority stream through the gate with the Master into the field that hounds are just leaving. Determined now to do or die, we turn as Mrs. Little did, ride at the fence where she did, jump a little short but, hurrah, find ourselves in the next field with her, Captain X, the huntsman, and a handful of others. A grand start! The rest of the Field are scattered in all directions. This we have time to see as we go on, galloping behind our leaders, collected and picking the length of the ridge and furrow as much as possible to save the horses. Mrs. Little pops over a bit of timber on the right but we, uncertain of our horse, follow the huntsman and Captain X over the fence and are glad to find our horse saw the ditch on the far side and spread himself well. He seems a good one, so let him have his head as much as possible. We are probably safest leaving as much as possible to him except to steady him some twenty yards from an obstacle. The great grass pastures are intoxicating. The going wonderful beyond dreams. Hounds are now bunched together and running on a breast-high scent; people are galloping on both wings but none are closer to hounds than the little lot with which we have the privilege to be. The next fence is a really big stake and bound with a ditch, we hear *crash*, bang, on either side as our horse rises and clears it well. "They're all right," we hear Captain X say, and turning our head we just see both men on their feet but still holding their horses. Next we come to a high, thick fence

where the only place to jump is gap-filled with timber. The huntsman is over, then Mrs. Little, Captain X, two others, ourself, and behind, the two who had fallen and a young farmer on an unclipped horse. We rap the timber a bit, but in a way that makes us feel that our horse is quite conversant with timber and its sterling qualities. Here hounds check a second or two; some cattle bunched in the corner have evidently charged over the line. We all pull up and stand still, and the huntsman, watching intently, moves forward to help if required, but our old friend Saintly, equally conversant with the doings of cattle, casts herself forward and joyfully proclaims the news of Master Charles to her friends and relations, and on we go. This is fun! The next nearest people were jumping into the field just as we started to gallop on. Our horses have had a breather and on we go, faster than ever, over a country of green grass and tall fences such as we had only dreamed of. Most places now we can jump in line, but after one essay on our own, in which we narrowly escaped disaster, we revert to the next best plan of following the first flight or in the van of the second. It is quite enough thrill to a novice in a strange country and we are rather pleased with ourselves. The horse is jumping beautifully and it is great. Suddenly we come to a lane, the huntsman and Captain X jump easily into and off the road. "Might slip up," says Mrs. Little. We pause a fraction while she tosses open a gate and the rest of us follow her through, jumping out on the right. A loud crash, someone is down on the road but is up, luckily, in a second and we see someone else has caught his horse. Up the lane gallops Mr. Smith followed by a half-dozen. We are a bit behind hounds, we see them running across a plough-field. Mrs. Little leads us over a rather blind fence so as to avoid the plough and catch up. Hounds are now more strung out and we reach a farm. A sheep dog with his tongue out passes us. "Hope he hasn't coursed our fox," says someone, and at that moment hounds check but only for a second or two. There is a distant holloa and the huntsman caps them on. The Master and some of the Field now catch

up, but one can see their horses have had about enough. A man with a bicycle has seen our fox—about two minutes ahead. Hounds are running with less cry, the ground is rising slightly, the fields are smaller and there is more jumping. Someone jumps a gate on our right, and someone else concertina'd his hat on our left. Mrs. Little and Captain X are riding on either side of tail hounds, the farmer on the half-clipped horse has to pull up. The Master is cursing his weight and his second horseman, the first whip is riding wide looking for a view. "Yonder he goes!" Yes, there he is two fields ahead making straight for his native hills. Hounds are like an arrow straight and true on his track. Horses are tiring, and we almost pray for a check. A large forbidding place bars our way. Captain X steadies his tired horse at the only possible place, they are over and we all follow. At the next we again spread out and follow Mrs. Little over a piece of timber. Our horse hits this hard and is almost down, but sitting still we help him recover. Mrs. Little having heard the crash, for the first time seems aware of our presence. "Take the fence when you can," she advises, "your horse is too blown now to jump timber." We now find ourselves on a not too slippery road. The horses are glad to feel the hard high and we gallop along the edge taking care to keep out of the gutters. For a few seconds hounds feather about and the huntsman puts them right. "He is twisting now," says Mrs. Little. "This way," and we open a gate. Two more fields and the end comes quickly, hounds catch their fox in the open after 33 minutes of the best, first 14 minutes at racing pace, 6 miles point and 9 as hounds ran. Our horse has his sides going and in another field we should have had to pull up. We are off, standing like Mrs. Little and the Master head to wind. Captain X is holding the huntsman's horse, the first whip comes into sight with a couple of hounds, then a long pause, and our farmer on the half-clipped horse, two red coats, and a lady, and Mr. Smith from another direction, then one by one practically all the three hundred, congratulating themselves on the fine hunt—one of the fastest this season. Our novice is lucky. Even-

tually seeing her host she goes up to him to say how much she has enjoyed her day. Mrs. Little comes up to speak to him too, and she hears her say, "and the stranger on the bay mare went very well indeed." Ears tingling, the novice turns away to look for thorns in the bay mare's legs, wondering if ever praise sounded more sweet yet really how undeserved. It all belonged to the bay mare and she heard a girl in a light



The right way to do it and well turned out.

blue habit saying with, was it, spite or envy? "She followed Mrs. Little all the way, rode bang on her tail." Thinking it was time to move and her horse might be getting cold, our novice moves to find her host. He takes her up to be introduced to the Master who has decided not to draw again as they are too far out of their country. Somewhat shyly our novice thanks the great man for a most enjoyable day, the best she has ever had. "Come again," is all he says. "Nice little mare you were riding. I saw her jump the first fence, that's what put you right." Glad and happy, the erstwhile novice, hunting now indelibly graven on her heart, rides off with her host and a young man who was of their company in the good

hunt and knows her host. The horses must be got home as expeditiously as possible. Jogging quietly on they overtake Mrs. Little, who it appears lives somewhere near, and it is decided to telephone for the car and groom to meet them at her house. This arrangement will save the horses the extra weights on their backs, and they will get home quietly and easily and by the shortest road. A good horsewoman never keeps a tired hunter out of his stable a second longer than is necessary, yet never hurries home, considering her horse before her own convenience. The only exception being, as in this case, to stop at a friend's stable to put him in for a few minutes and give him some gruel before a long hack home. Our tired novice gives the brown mare a last pat as the groom loosens her girths. Mrs. Little asks the party in to tea, and her little hunting-box, with its stable full of perfect hunters, and its tiny rooms, crammed with sporting prints and books of all kinds, is a delight to our novice. Poached eggs, buttered toast, a blazing fire, comfy chairs, yet nothing that dirty boots and habits can damage, hunting conversation. "Just perfect," sighs the erstwhile novice, "and the sort of house I shall have when I marry." "Just what I was thinking," agreed the agreeable young man, fondling one of Mrs. Little's terriers who had placed herself in the centre of his yellow waistcoat, the better to view the remainder of the buttered toast. "The car is at the door." Dusk is closing in, the fire-light making a pretty picture of the pink swallow-tail coats, splattered breeches of the men and dark habits of the women. "I suppose we shall see you at the Ball to-night," says Mrs. Little, "and I hope you will come and hunt with us again." "Yes, you really must," echoes the agreeable young man, and the novice thinks that hunting people are the nicest in the world, and there is nothing to beat hunting.

ON CLOTHES

Women are always supposed to fuss more about their clothes than men do. One cannot be sure: it depends on the individual! But in any book on Riding and Hunting for



Photo W. D. Moss

HOW TO TURN OUT FOR HUNTING—RIDING SIDE-SADDLE

Mrs Maurice Kingscott, who always looks exceptionally nice on a horse, and very well turned out. Note good top hat, neat tie and veil, also the right sort of saddle, bridle, martingale, etc., perfectly put on



HOW TO TURN OUT FOR HUNTING—RIDING ASTRIDE

*Lady Warrender, who is one of the best turned out ladies who ride astride over Leicestershire
Note good boots and breeches—also saddle without any padding between her knees
and the horse so that she can get a proper "feel"*

the aspiring young horsewoman some mention of clothes is desirable.

Again the individual temperament comes in. To some women clothes are an obsession which follows them even in the hunting-field—they would sooner be seen with hounds streaming away, trotting down a road, than with one hair out of place.

The ignorant should beware of judging women by their clothes out hunting—more even than elsewhere, appearances are deceptive. The lady with the beautifully ironed top hat may not ride so well to hounds as the long, lean mahogany-faced female in a fusty coat showing evidence of the chicken farm tended before the Meet. For instance, on one occasion an extraordinary elderly female turned up, riding astride with her spurs upside down and a long white streamer fluttering out from behind her waist (which on closer inspection turned out to be an old-fashioned white stay-lace). A lot of people made jokes, but a year later this lady came to the assistance of the Hunt finances and was elected Master! It seemed that mad about hunting, she had not had a chance to learn to ride in her youth and was now making up for lost time. The spirit was all right. In condemning people's clothes one should first find out what is underneath—the foreigner in sponge-bag breeches with a silk hat, the girl in a velvet jockey cap and a pale blue tie. Be careful not to sneer unless, anyhow, they offend also against other and more important canons of the Chase. Clothes must not be made the only criterion of a fox-hunter. It is the Spirit that counts—one can get nearly as much fun on a grass-fed horse hunting an "oldman" kangaroo with a pack of beagles in Australia, as riding "with the cream of the cream in the Shire of the Shires." There is danger in the-way-we-do-things attitude becoming almost more important than the thing itself. Just as Alexander the Great's father said to him as a boy playing on his zither: "My son, aren't you rather ashamed of playing it so well?" Specialization becomes a curse in every sport and game if pushed to excess.

On the other hand, however, as shown in Chapter I, there exists a strong tradition of the Chase, handed down to us from the stately days of the Bourbon kings of France, that ladies and gentlemen rode to hounds in their best clothes, and we as tradition-loving, conservative people maintain the tradition as best we can to the point of evolving a complete "uniform." The uniform is not so spectacular in the case of the fairer sex. The male flaunts all the glory of red coats and white breeches, but the female of the species having taken to fox-hunting rather later in the day missed the colourful times and started to enter the hunting-field when drab colours were the fashion.¹

Distinctive Hunt facings, or collars, are about all the hunting woman can sport on her funereal garb at the present time. Once given "the button" the hunting woman is fairly safe, but it is before this delectable time that the novice so often goes wrong, and a few words of advice may save her those signs of disapproval on her hunting friends' faces as she rides up in a "terrible bowler" or "dreadful habit."

Perhaps the best general advice to a novice is to aim at Neatness. We cannot all have beautifully made, perfectly turned-out clothes, but we are none so poor or so humble that we cannot be Neat, and if possible clean-looking as well, with coat well brushed, hair tidy, and tie well tied, none of which costs a penny more of money!

Secondly, do not go in for anything exaggerated in type or colour. For instance, do not have over-baggy breeches, or a large button-hole of violets. It is best to stick to what "is done" rather than to strike out in new lines by yourself—unless you have the experience to know what you are doing.

Thirdly, when you have to buy anything new for riding or hunting get the very best article you can afford—best cut, best material, and best workmanship—it will repay you in the end by length of service as well as in appearance. Guineas

¹ General mourning at the death of George III is said to have first introduced black coats for ordinary male wear—which later, no doubt, coal dust perpetuated to our day when electricity may again tend to encourage bright, clean colours!

saved in hunting equipment by going to inferior makers for habits, boots, breeches, saddles, bridles, etc., are almost always wasted.

CLOTHES FOR RIDING SIDE-SADDLE

You should go to a first-rate tailor specializing in habits. Country tailors are often excellent, but it is probable that a novice will do best to go to a good London habit-maker for her first habit for hunting. Choose a good material with his advice, "whip-cord," or plain—preferably black or dark blue in colour, though a very dark grey mixture is useful in some very muddy provincial countries, as though never looking so smart, it does not become so soon shabby. A good cloth is bound to be fairly expensive, but a shoddy material is worse than useless for hunting. It is an economy to have two skirts to each coat. Breeches should match your habit. The best tailors keep a stock of different weights in the same material—it is well sometimes to have your breeches made in the lighter weight, but lined at the seat with chamois leather for comfort. Habit skirts should always be of the heaviest grade, but with the coat you can suit yourself.



Coat too short.

The habit coat should be long enough, anyhow, to cover your breeches when viewed from behind, and just touching the horse's back is generally a nice-looking length. No one now wears very long coats or tight waists. And it is not the fashion to button too high in front—one or two buttons is enough. There should be one slit at the back, or two if you prefer—the former being considered more slimming to the figure. The habit skirt should not be too long, but it should cover the right foot neatly. You will find your habit will fit

best if you take your own saddle to sit on when you are tried on the last time. You will probably need three or four fittings, and be especially careful that your coat is not tight at the arm-holes, fits well at the back of the neck, does not wrinkle across the back when you hold your reins or bag over the chest. A couple of inside pockets are useful, and you can have the piece that touches the horse's back lined with mackintosh, so that it can be scrubbed easier. The skirt should fit particularly well over the right knee, so do not have side-saddle breeches made full. The elastic for the right foot must be in exactly the right place or the skirt will tend to ruck up in ugly fashion.

Your boots must be good, with fairly thick soles, comfortable for warm socks or stockings, close fitting up the leg, but not uncomfortable anywhere. Tight boots stop the circulation riding side-saddle, and cold feet are a misery. In old days ladies' hunting boots were made of patent leather—but ordinary blacking leather looks much more workmanlike and, moreover, is much warmer for the feet.

If a waistcoat is worn it should be made of box-cloth—white, cream, buff, or pale yellow. Some years ago smart ladies wore white leather waistcoats, but they are difficult things to clean.

Leather breeches are warm and comfortable and last for years, but these days "leathers" seem hardly worth the expense.

Hats are very important, and for these you should go to the very best makers, and it is worth the small extra expense to have them made for you, whether top hats or bowlers. The novice should be chary of the former; for unless the wearer is really well turned-out they only accentuate the awfulness. Many women "over-hat" themselves—a small face does not look nice in a wide brim and vice versa, nor must the "topper" be too low in the crown. All hats worn with a bun should have a firm piece of elastic to go under the bun tight enough to keep the hat steady. With a top hat side-saddle it is really essential to wear your hair in a bun or an imitation

thereof. It should be done in a small tight plait firmly tied at the ends, coiled round and enclosed in a special hunting hair-net to keep it absolutely tidy and pinned flat to the head. Nothing looks worse than a "loose knot" of hair just poked into a hair-net. Hunting is hard on the hair and loose ends and wisps quickly turn one into a sight. A fine hair-net right over the head keeps one tidy. Hair-pins should be long,



The wrong way to wear a top hat.



The right way.

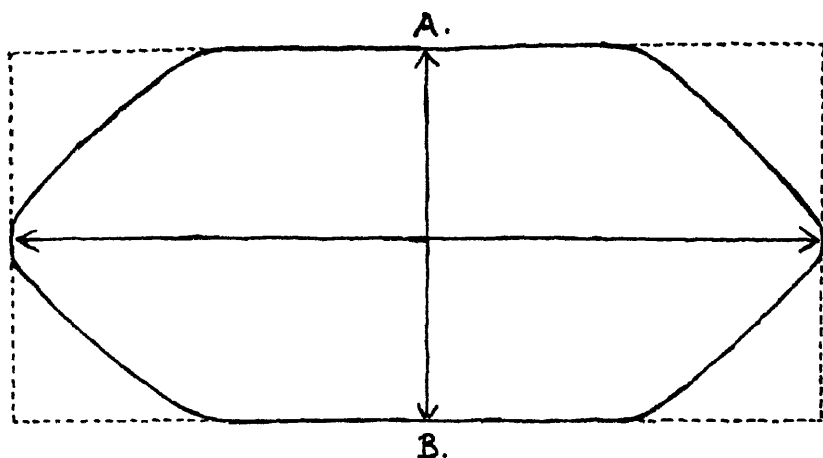
firm ones, with corrugations to prevent them slipping out, and must be carefully put in to stay. Four should be sufficient, but they *must* stay put!

If you use a false bun it can be sewn to your hat, or made up on a small pad and stitched on to a small length of inch-wide elastic (the colour of your hair) safety-pinned to the lining of your hat; the bun can then be easily taken off to tidy it up, yet cannot slip out of place.

A veil should always be worn with a top hat side-saddle.

A bowler hat should also be carefully chosen; it must not have a wide flat brim or be worn on the back of the head. Hair must be very tidy, but a veil and bun are optional. If a veil is worn it has to be very carefully made and put on. It should be a neat net mesh in cotton or silk or imitation, and must not be a spotty or fancy pattern—if too thick it will make the face look black, if too thin it will tear easily. Veils are easily made at home—an oblong length of veiling with the

corners cut off and threaded all round with fine elastic, this sort of shape slightly gathered in. The width must be just sufficient to reach from the upper side of the brim to under your chin; the length should be just enough to provide ends to twist or tie neatly at the back. After tying, place a hair-pin firmly through veil and bun into your hat-elastic on each side to keep everything firm and tidy. A small black pin in front through the elastic of the veil and the ribbon of the hat prevents the veil bagging, small black pins can also be used to pin



TO MAKE A NEAT VEIL AT HOME

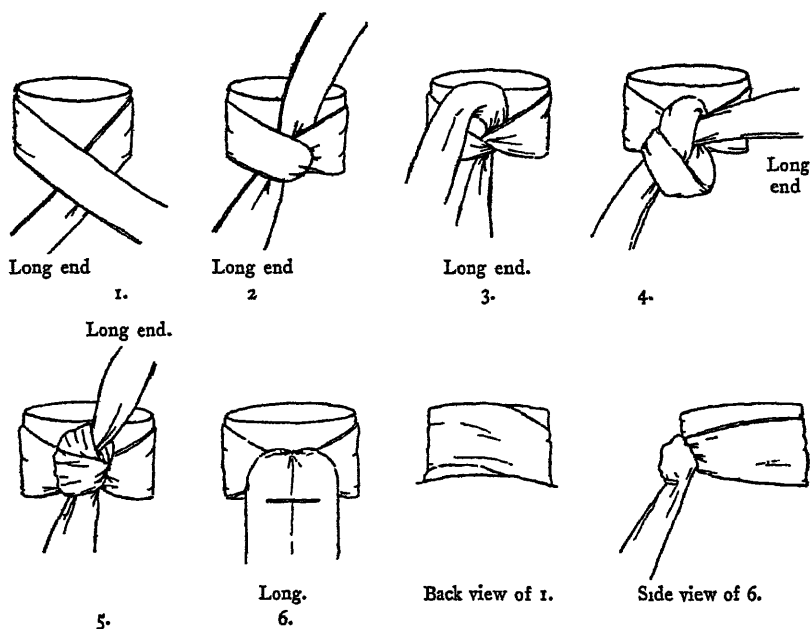
A to B = exact width of material required measured from hat ribbon to under chin.

C to D = length round brim and enough over to tie neatly.

Shape as above, cutting off square corners, and then thread with fine elastic to fit bowler or silk hat

the tied ends neatly at the back. A tidy head is one of the two hall-marks of a good woman to hounds. The other outward visible sign may be said to be her tie. This must always be a good shape and perfectly tied. Beware of ready-made "shaped stocks." The smartest kind of tie to suit a long neck is a straight length of material with both sides folded inwards and folded again. It must be put on as uncreased as possible, then twisted once at the back to make the sides flat and tied in front with a "grannie" knot. But the art of tying a neat tie is only acquired with practice and deft fingers. The tie with a slit at the back for one end to go through and narrower at the

sides is an easier substitute to start with. Hunting ties should be made of cotton *piqué*, mercerised cotton or heavy silk—the two former can be boiled so are easier washed, but the latter is more comfortable to the neck. They should be white or cream colour and if patterned should be fine pin stripes and hardly visible—spots or colours of any kind are wrong hunting, except before the Opening Meet or after the first week in April. Coloured ties and scarves are allowable and look amusingly



TYING A SILK FOURFOLD HUNTING TIE

attractive for cub-hunting, and in the spring and for hacking any time.

You cannot have a neat tie unless you have a well-fitting shirt and neck-band. Your shirts and ties should be made to fit you; the neck-band is important, it must not be thick, but wide enough for the tie to fit tidily over it. A hiatus between neck-band and tie is very unsightly!

Your tie can be secured in front with a plain gold safety-pin, decorated, perhaps, with a small fox mask or running fox in tiny diamonds, but absolutely nothing else in the way of

jewellery should be worn. Ear-rings, bracelets, and diamond rings are out of place.

Hunting-shirts can be made of silk, cotton, flannel or, what is most comfortable and warm, jersey stockinet. Everything must tuck well inside the breeches so that it cannot blow out and get untidy.

If desired, a white or pale yellow sweater can be worn over the shirt with the bottom edge likewise tucked out of sight. Never wear one with any sort of coloured border or "Fair Isle" effect out hunting.

Thick yellow wash-leather gloves look nice and are strong yet warm and supple for the fingers. (When washed a certain amount of soap should always be left in wash-leather gloves as they dry much softer than when rinsed out thoroughly.) Be sure and buy all riding gloves at least one and a half sizes larger than those you generally wear, and nice thick ones.

You will require a pair of string gloves for a horse that sweats. In wet weather you will need woollen ones and you should always carry a pair under your saddle-flap tucked in the girths where they can easily be got at (see page 84).

A spur is optional—a novice is advised against one till she has gained experience and proficiency. The ordinary woman side-saddle should never hunt in a spur with sharp rowels of any kind (see page 62).

With regard to underclothes, the individual will suit herself—remembering that anything very loose wrinkles, and that wrinkles under breeches are apt to rub the skin. Silk and wool mixture is good, or all wool if preferred. For the very chilly person there is nothing warmer than very fine boys' woollen pants reaching to the ankle, and if finished below the knee with silk continuations they are extra nice to wear under boots and breeches. Either long woollen socks or silk stockings can be worn—or both! An elastic belt can be worn if desired, but nothing with any sort of "bones" or buckles.

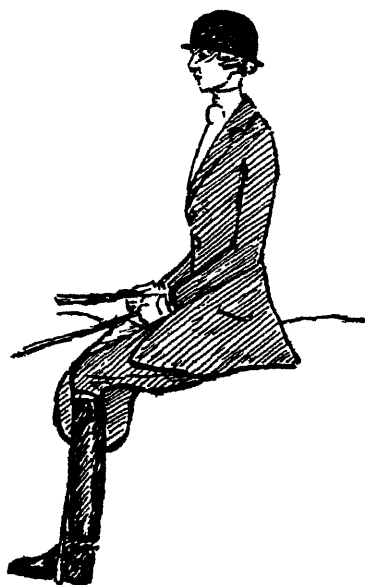
To keep habits smart a good valet is essential, as there is a lot of work attached to them if you are hunting four or five

days a week. Anyhow, a good brushing-room is necessary, with a deep sink and hot and cold water, a stove for drying, a clothes-horse, a "line" in the open air, a firm deal table for scrubbing and brushing, a floor not damaged by water, and probably a big wooden tub. A good clothes-brush and a scrubbing brush will be required.

A very dirty soaked habit skirt should be popped into a tub



Badly turned out.



Well turned out.

of cold water at once—it is much easier to clean before the mud has been allowed to dry on.

Ammonia, well diluted, a spot or two in a saucer of water, helps to remove marks and to freshen up the material, but if too strong is apt to leave a mark. At the end of every season it is a good thing to send all habits to the tailor to be tidied up and thoroughly cleaned and pressed—they are not then liable to collect moth and will be all ready for you the following November.

Coats should always be kept on hangers, and skirts neatly folded lengthways.

Boots should be kept on their trees and in a dry place.

CLOTHES ASTRIDE

There is still considerable divergence of opinion as to the correct get-up for women hunting astride ; the great thing is to avoid the appearance of a hermaphrodite or someone's groom !

Your coat should not be too short, which is a common error, and must have a back placket. (Never wear a short tight tweed coat without a placket for hunting.) Breeches must be extremely well cut, and should button at the knee down the inside of the leg, which is much neater than buttons on the outside. Some women astride favour dark navy blue coat and breeches—others a black coat with fawn breeches ; both look equally smart on good figures. Fawn breeches should not be too light or too dark a shade, and do not have them cut very full. A silk, flannel, or stockinet shirt can be worn as with a habit, and the same neatly tied tie and plain pin. Boots must be extremely well made by a man's bootmaker, plain blacking leather, coming as high up the leg as possible. New boots should be cut so high that the first time on they slightly nip you at the back of the knee ! After a little wear they soon "break" and settle down—the bootmaker should see that they break in the correct place. The feet should be made rather on the big side, with fairly thick soles and cut on the high side at the ankle. Never, of course, with pointed toes. The leg must be as close fitting as possible with comfort.

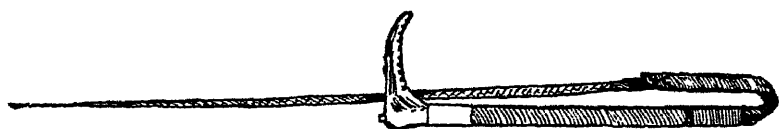
Garter straps of black leather should be worn, the buckle of which must come just in front of the breeches buttons, with tabs neatly held in their keepers, both ends facing outwards ; untidy garters working round to the back of the calf are very unsightly, so keep them tight and short.

Spurs give a finish to the astride boot, and on the right heels are a useful "aid." They can be of various patterns. "12th Lancer" is a nice spur for a woman, with the neck turning slightly downwards. The spur should come high up the

ankle and be held by neat spur leathers cut to fit your boots. Some boots require a small leather block at the back of the heel to prevent the spurs sagging.

"Jockeys" and plenty of chalk should get your new boots on over silk stockings quite easily, and you will need a good strong boot "jack" with handles to remove them, especially if wet through.

A neat bowler hat seems the more usually worn. A few M.F.H.'s think that astride ladies wearing the "Hunt button" should turn out in a top hat, but the majority of well-dressed astride women wear an ordinary bowler with or without a veil and bun. The worst "sight" is a flat-brimmed bowler hat with broad elastic, no bun and a hat guard; this sort of turn-out is likely to be completed by a crop without a lash! These things must *not* be done. A fair-sized and weighty "whip" with a lash must always be carried—the kind of things sold as "ladies' hunting-crops" are often toys, quite unsuitable for opening a gate. You need one with a good crook to the handle, nicely balanced and made of whalebone or cane, and a screw in the handle helps one to hold a gate whether astride or side-saddle.



The rider's hair must be kept very neat—if possible more so than side-saddle. If shingled, a very fine flat hair-net put over the hair under the hat helps to keep it tidy. A bun, if worn, should be small and neat. Never wear your hat on the back of your head or elastic under the chin.

Gloves can be yellow wash-leather, hogskin, or dogskin, also woollen or string, as suggested side-saddle.

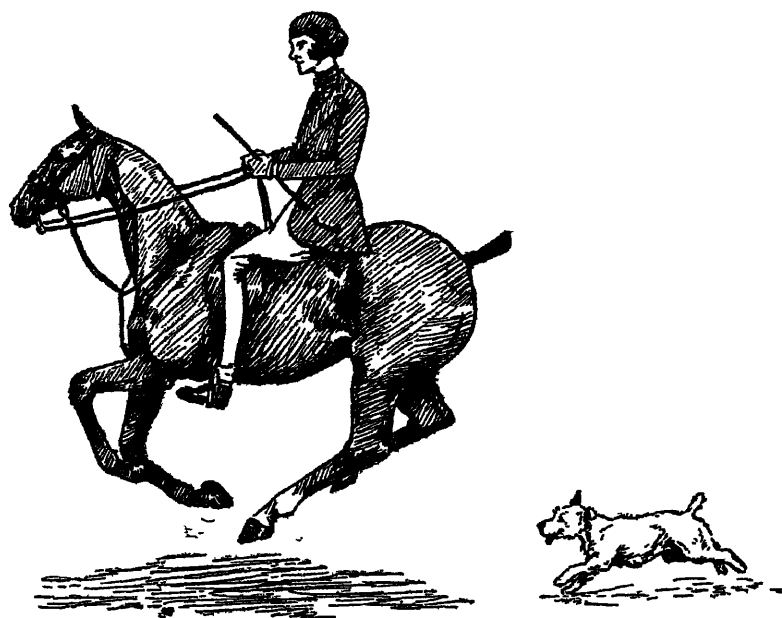
SUGGESTION TO ALL. Do not forget to have a safe inside pocket to your astride coat. Never carry a metal flask in a breast-pocket—it may break your ribs if your horse rolls on you—and do not put it in your side-pockets—under the same

circumstances it may hurt you badly. And the same warning applies to metal cigarette cases.

You should always own a good folding "hunting-map" of the country you intend to hunt in, and give one each to your groom and chauffeur.

FOR HACKING

For ordinary riding at home nothing can be more comfortable, either astride or side-saddle, than a pair of well-cut Jodhpore breeches; they should be extremely well cut and a



A good hacking turn-out.

darkish fawn colour. If you are short of labour for cleaning habits they are useful to wear side-saddle without a skirt for hacking about in the country—saving cleaning a habit skirt, breeches, and boots. But Jodhpore breeches are not suitable or comfortable for much fast work of any kind.

With Jodhpores you can wear ordinary brown walking-shoes, a high-necked sweater, or an ordinary shirt and collar and tie. For more serious riding astride, country shows and

cub-hunting you should wear a tweed coat with fawn-coloured breeches and brown boots. The latter should have garters and be a nice chestnut-brown tone. With this get-up you can wear a comfortable soft hat, probably grey or fawn colour. If you wear a black bowler hat you can wear black boots.

Side-saddle for summer, country shows, serious cub-hunting, etc., you will need a light-weight habit—either dark blue or brown in colour or a nice thin tweed, to be worn with a flannel shirt (or striped cotton) and neat collar and tie, with a plain felt squash hat to match your habit, and brown boots. At “smart” shows you should ride in a dark blue or a black habit and black boots, with a bowler or a top hat—if the latter you must, of course, also wear a hunting-tie and veil and bun. You should carry a short light cane, plain or covered with plaited leather.

For cub-hunting in October, hunter trials, etc., you will probably be wise to put on a bowler hat whether astride or side-saddle. It can be worn then with a tweed habit or coat and either a hunting-tie or a shirt with a turned-down collar and tie. Always take your hunting-whip cub-hunting mornings.

For point-to-points, local traditions are apt to govern the choice of clothes, as well as individual ideas of suitability! There is a general tendency to wear high-necked, coloured sweaters and M.F.H. velvet caps—both of which are a sensible departure from the strict “hunting costume” of old point-to-point racing, both for comfort and from the spectator’s point of view.

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CHAPTER VI

STABLE KNOWLEDGE FROM THE WOMEN'S POINT OF VIEW

“The eye of the master maketh beasts fat.”

(Old Greek Proverb.)

THE first essential with any stud of horses, however small, is a good head man. He is indispensable, more particularly when the owner of the stud has not been “through the mill” and does not know exactly how a stable should be run, and if the men are doing their job in a thorough and efficient manner. Unfortunately, like most good things, the knowledgeable and reliable head men are very few and far between, and very many who have attained that rank are not worthy of the name. It is difficult to understand how they ever reached the category of stud-groom or head man.

Except in the most lavish establishments, what is known as a working stud-groom is always employed—that is to differentiate between the man who keeps his coat on, wears a collar and tie, takes his hat off to you in the morning, and generally “bosses” up the rest of the stable staff, but never dirties his hands himself!—as opposed to the man who is what Mr. Jorrocks would call a “peep of day boy!”—always there in the morning, who looks to it that the men under him are also there, and sets about his duties in a practical and business-like manner, almost too busy in the morning to touch his hat—never shirking taking the rough with the smooth, and not tolerating any slackness on the part of the stable-helpers. This type of working stud-groom is the man to aim at employing. He must, of course, be a fair horseman, a good feeder, clipper, and trimmer—honest and steady, and *above all* quiet at all times with his horses. He must always have the interests of his employer and his horses at heart, seeing that

the latter are well fed and well cared for, and that no inferior forage is used.

A good stud-groom is worth paying well as so much depends on him. It isn't fair to give a man great responsibilities and grudge him his wages. He is certain to be a man who has worked his way up the ladder, and as your stud-groom he deserves his comfortable rooms or cottage.

Stablemen's rooms above the loose boxes are a mistake, as this arrangement disturbs both the men and the horses. Horses must have some quiet to themselves every day as well as at night, and the boxes are probably higher and better ventilated when there are no bedrooms above them. It is well that the men should live close at hand, or anyhow the stud-groom and second horseman, as so much time is wasted going to and fro, and as grooms are only human the horses are likely to suffer. In the event of a horse getting cast in his box at night, or in the case of a sick horse, it is useful to have someone sleeping close at hand. Old stables are generally warm and dry, but one must be sure that they are well ventilated and that the floors are in good repair. Dark stables are bad for hunters' eyesight as well as being difficult to keep clean. The stable water-supply must be above reproach. The drains should, of course, be regularly seen to, and kept well swilled down; it is better to have open drains for some distance away from the boxes as blocked drains occur so easily, and are a great menace to the health of man and beast.

Remember that a contented groom makes for contented horses.

New stables are apt to be colder than the thick walls of old buildings. If the new range of boxes is built of wood, be sure that the roof is high enough, and if possible of double thickness—otherwise the boxes will be bitterly cold in winter and terribly hot in summer. For this reason single corrugated iron is a bad material, except on the score of cheapness. Thatch is good except for the danger with fire, and its attraction as a harbourage for birds, mice, and insects. It is nice to see smart stables and outward appearances are often a sign of inward

spiritual grace, yet it is not always that the best stud across country comes out of the smartest-looking yard. However, the smart stable with brisk, alert men generally means that the owner is keen and knowledgeable as well as appreciative. What really matters is that the stable buckets are scrupulously clean, and, curiously enough, the hand that keeps the buckets clean generally puts a good polish on the brass.

It is obvious for many reasons that overlooking the stables is a man's job, and that a gentleman is the better master of men, but it sometimes happens that a woman of necessity has to supervise her stable arrangements. There are many keen hunting-women running their stables excellently, and there are others who regularly "do" their own horses after a day's hunting, getting the maximum of sport out of a minimum expense. All honour to them; and their knowledge combined with practical experience, intelligence and sympathy is unrivalled, and the novice requiring information cannot do better than consult one of them with regard to efficiency, combined with the lowest possible costs. We hope, however, that the novice will be in fairly comfortable circumstances and able to run her small stable on a moderately economical basis. Life is not long enough to have time to count the last oat, and it requires vast experience to save the pence over hunting. The great thing is to save the pounds on vets' bills and to keep your horses fit.

However, every woman with any pretensions to horsemanship should know the rudiments of stable management, and be able to discuss her horses' ailments intelligently with her stud-groom, and insist on him reporting to her anything that he finds wrong with a horse after a day's hunting. How often could a bad back have been saved by a strict observance of this rule! There is nothing more humiliating than to notice a sore lip or a girth gall just as you are going to mount your second horse, and to be told by the second horseman cheerfully, "That's nothing, you did it last time you rode 'im!"

So long as the results are satisfactory and that all disasters are reported, it is probably best for the novice to leave all stable

arrangements and routine to her stud-groom, at the same time she should know at least theoretically what these duties are. It is his job to see that his employer is not robbed and is getting good value for money in the way of hay, corn, and all other stable requirements. Cheap forage, which means bad forage, is false economy, as nothing is more harmful to horses doing fast work than dusty, badly got hay or corn. He must have a practical knowledge of veterinary work, and be able to give first aid to any hunting, or other accident on sound lines. He must have an eye like a hawk to notice in a second if any of his charges are not quite up to the mark, and be able to diagnose correctly what is ailing them. The trouble may only be a slight temperature, indicating the commencement of a cold, which, if taken in time, can often be nipped in the bud—or the horse may be dull and out of sorts from other causes, such as liver trouble (which is more common with highly artificially fed animals, such as hunters and polo ponies, than people imagine). It may possibly be that one horse's kidneys are not working right, and require a good flushing out, and that another has a slightly filled leg after work or hunting, requiring hot fomentations or a pressure bandage, and a day or two on the "easy list." In fact, one may say there are dozens of minor ailments which horses are heir to that should not escape the vigilant eye of the first-rate head man. It is important that he should have a good knowledge of the conformation of a horse's foot, and see to it that the blacksmith knows his job, and is shoeing his horses to the utmost advantage to enable them to do their work with the greatest degree of comfort. Many a good foot has been spoilt by bad shoeing, and an otherwise sound animal turned into an unsound one. Continual neglect in "removing" when a shoe has worked or grown into the foot is almost certain to be followed by a corn, with its attendant degrees of lameness. Also, continual bad shoeing will render a horse susceptible to foot diseases—such as laminitis, navicular, and seedy toe, which are far more serious troubles. Therefore it follows that this side of stable management is of the greatest importance.

Provided your groom is satisfied with his pay and values his place, you ought to be able to trust him absolutely; in fact, you should do so. At the same time it is not right that an employer through laziness, himself or herself, should permit valuable orders or large cheques to go through the stud-groom's hands without any check on his doings. It is not fair to put this great temptation in the way of a man earning the stud-groom's relatively small wage—an otherwise scrupulously honest man may yield momentarily to the wiles of corn merchants and your stud will suffer—all owing to your unfair carelessness. You should pay the bills regularly every month, and all large orders for feeding stuffs should go direct from the employer.

It is both interesting and instructive every year to make out the total of your stable expenses, including wages, forage, rates, taxes, chemist, vet, shoeing, clothes, and repairs, then work out the weekly cost per horse each season. This varies surprisingly, largely with the price of hay. (Appendix I.) Shoeing is always a heavy item.

FEEDING

Your head man must be a good feeder, which is not as easy an accomplishment as one might imagine. Throwing the same amount of food, day in, day out, into a horse's manger, irrespective of the work he may be doing, is not good stable-management, and will generally lead to trouble. There is an old saying: "First get to know your horse and then you can feed him," which incidentally is a very true one, for it is seldom that two horses (at any rate in a small stud) require exactly the same way of feeding. Horses' insides, like human insides, are not all made identical. Some few seem to have cast-iron constitutions and voracious appetites, and that type no doubt would look equally well whether a good or indifferent man were looking after them, but unfortunately that sort are in the minority, and lucky is the owner who possesses, and still luckier the stud-groom who has under his charge, 50 per cent of his animals built that way. The real "artist" in the stable

is the man who can keep all the horses under his care equally "round," hard, fit and well, during the strenuous months of hunting. He will have faddy and delicate feeders to contend with, and it is up to him to see that these sort get the right amount of food inside them to enable them to thrive, and to do their work with no undue loss in condition. Feeding is by no means an easy task, but one requiring brains as well as patience. Horses are odd creatures, and can be tempted in many ways to "clean-up"—some do not like too much dry food—most get tired of too much wet (such as mash, etc.), but by variation and the addition of tempting morsels (such as a carrot or an apple, grated up and mixed with their food) it is surprising how a horse can be induced to "clean-up." There are horses that will only feed really well at night when everything is quiet—with no noise or sounds to distract their attention—see to it that this animal gets a great deal more food left with him for night consumption than the one who has cleaned-up his breakfast, midday-feed, his tea, and well into his supper.

A hunter in hard work (three days a fortnight or possibly four half-days in the same time) should have all the corn in reason he will consume in four feeds. Not many horses will eat more than 16 lb. a day, and the majority will average out at less—about 14 lb.—and this is sufficient, provided it is supplemented by a ration of really good old hay.¹ One-year-old hay is old enough—no advantage is derived from feeding anything with more age on it. Meadow hay (or soft hay as it is sometimes called) will do and is cheaper, but there is no doubt that the best mixture (old seed hay) consisting of clover, or sainfoin, with rye grass—in the proportion of one-third clover or sainfoin to two-thirds rye grass, is the ideal forage, and well worth the extra money (possibly another £1 10s. to £2 a ton) in that it will muscle up the horse's back and quarters, and generally do him more good than an equal, or even a larger amount of the soft hay. Any hay used must have

¹ Old hay means hay that has been in the stack at least six months. Good sound hay got up in June can be given to horses in the following January.

a good "nose"—i.e. it must smell good and sweet, and be of a good colour, as green looking as possible, and with no dust. It is nice to see in seed-hay the leaf still on the clover or the sainfoin, as it means that the crop was got in good weather, and has not been knocked about too much in the making. Hay that is very dark in colour, generally denotes that there has been some overheating in the stack, and although nearly always smelling very sweet and rich (almost like tobacco), it is injurious to horses—sometimes causing colic, and generally purging them. Horses eat this hay very readily, as they like it, but it should be avoided. Hay very light in colour means that either there was too much sun on it before it was carried, so that the nature or goodness has been burnt out of it, or that it was too long in the field after being cut, owing to wet weather, and the nature was washed out of it. This hay has little or no "nose," and is of little use as a feeding property. Therefore, take care to buy your hay, whether it be "meadow" or "seed," with a nice bright look about it, and of a greenish colour if possible. Owing to the vagaries of the English climate the hay with the green colour in it is sometimes difficult to get, but it can at any rate be bright looking! In Western America hay has been seen come out of the stack in the winter, exactly the same colour as when it was mown, owing to the hot climate and brilliant sunshine, enabling ranchers to cut one day and cart the next and thereby losing none of the natural richness of the grass.

Towards the middle of the hunting season, when horses have had some really long and exhausting days, a handful of good crushed beans mixed with their feed the night before going hunting helps them to keep their condition and is particularly good for aged horses.

HAY NETS

The bulk of the hay is, of course, fed at night—a few pounds being given midday and after morning work. The use of hay nets which can be bought at most saddlers is a great economy and fairly generally used nowadays. These nets are

made of strong string, and when well stuffed will hold round about fifteen pounds of hay—an amount an average good feeder will easily consume before the morning, pulling it bit by bit out of his net, thereby avoiding 20 per cent of his allowance being pulled on to the ground from his rack or manger, soiled and trampled on, only to be thrown out with the manure in the morning, and so wasted.

OATS

Oats should be heavy, plump and thin-skinned, and have no fusty smell about them—white are best, although winter greys are very good, and thinner in their skins than black. At the same time, a good sound black oat is not to be despised, though seldom weighing so heavy as the white. It is better to give oats that have been crushed—always provided you buy them before crushing, to ensure no inferior oats are mixed with them. Care should be taken that in crushing them the corn is not too flattened out, this causing a wastage in flour; what is really required is known as “milling,” which merely cracks the outer husk and avoids the possibility of the corn going through the horse whole and undigested—which is often the case with greedy feeders that bolt their food.

Always be sure your bins are in good order, so that mice cannot get in. Horses hate musty, mice-ridden stuff. The bins must be in a dry place and kept clean and tidy.

CHAFF

Chaff should be made from good hay—some grooms think anything is good enough to cut up for chaff—but bad chaff is only one degree better than bad hay. A fair proportion should always be mixed with the corn-feed—the amount varying as to whether the horse is a greedy or a dainty feeder. If economy has to be studied, meadow-hay is quite good enough for chaff—or even sweet oat-straw, which is cheaper still to buy.

BEDDING

Use good wheat-straw—old for preference—horses will eat new straw and blow themselves out. As an alternative to

straw, peat-moss litter can be used and is useful when a horse devours his bedding; but care should be taken to see that all wet litter is removed daily, and the dry bedding well raked over. Also that the horse's feet are not allowed to become caked with it. The same remarks apply to sawdust, another substitute sometimes used. Wood-chips make good bedding and are healthy, and so are possibly the best alternative to straw. They can generally be had for the carting, but if a garden or paddock is a consideration, remember the manurial value of these straw-substitutes is very small.

With regard to forage it should always be remembered by right-minded hunting folk that it is good policy in a hunting country to buy when possible direct from the farmer—it all helps to popularize hunting.

CARROTS

Carrots, although a luxury, are very beneficial—and one or two a day will do a horse good and relieve the monotony of his diet—give them whole and let him do the munching—if sliced, a horse is apt to bolt them, and they may stick in his throat.

LINSEED

Linseed is indispensable in a horse's diet for it is obvious that a horse kept in a stable, eating the amount of heating food that he does, requires now and again a mild laxative to keep his blood cool and his inside right, and there is nothing to touch linseed for the purpose. It should be boiled till it jellies and the jelly given in a mash twice a week, according to the particular horse's turn to go hunting. On Saturdays it can be given all round.

BRAN

Bran forms the base of the mash to which the linseed-jelly and a small feed of oats is added, and like linseed, has a laxative effect when given wet, the whole being well mixed and given hot. Very few horses, however fastidious, can resist this pudding, and the regular use of it is of the greatest importance in keeping horses in good health.

You should buy good fresh bran only.

WATER

A liberal supply should always be before the horse so that he can drink when he feels disposed—this is better than only giving water at stated times. Every horse should have his own bucket left in his stable, and a “bucket-stand,” into which the bucket fits, in the corner of his box, and raised from the floor. This is a better, safer, and cleaner way than placing the bucket on the ground. Care must be taken that any water remaining in the morning is thrown away, and all buckets properly rinsed out. Cleanliness in the stable should be always studied and mangers should never be allowed to get dirty. Bran once wetted soon becomes sour—and the remains of even a small quantity of mash, unless removed, will sour the manger, and put a delicate feeder off his food.

PHYSIC

Many people leave a lump of rock salt in every horse's manger, and for young horses one can buy small brick-like “licks” which can be fixed into a holder, and contain the natural salts like iodine, iron, and sea-salt which are so necessary for all young animals. Some horses gnaw the walls of their boxes, partly in boredom and partly in order to scrape off the plaster, having an instinctive craving for these necessary salts.

Physic, in a general way, the less used the better—but a horse now and again needs a physic-ball. For instance, coming in off grass when first got up in the summer—and later if his blood gets overheated from an excess of corn—a condition generally shown by spots or pimples in the skin, known as “humour.” Or, when a horse is unfortunate enough to meet with an accident which necessitates some days' complete rest. Coughs, which are one of the curses of the stable, have to be dealt with, by physic—such as a pint of linseed-oil given in a drench; or one of the several good cough-drinks or cough-balls which are made up by a reliable

firm, can be used. Every stable should have a medicine cupboard, containing anyhow the following :

- A few cough drinks.
- A few colic drinks.
- A tin of disinfectant
- Electuary (for coughs and sore throats).
- A tin of lanoline (grease).
- A tin of boracic powder (for dry dressings).
- A tin of Antiphlogistine (for poultices), also "Outoplasm" plaster, which is simpler to use for fomentations.
- Bottle of lead lotion (for backs).
- Bottle of iodine (for surface wounds).
- Bottle of peroxide of hydrogen (for deep wounds).¹
- A few ounces of nitre (to flush out kidneys).
- Epsom salts for occasional use.
- A set of clean surgical bandages.
- A roll of absorbent cotton-wool.
- A pair of forceps.
- A clinical thermometer.
- A small syringe.

If anything goes radically wrong and a horse does not show signs of improvement it is well to take the advice of a knowledgeable hunting man and call in the vet he recommends. If your groom opines that some mysterious lameness is seated in the shoulder, you may be sure he really does not know where it is ! Horses rarely lame themselves in the shoulder without very great cause, which the rider should be the first to know all about, yet many grooms, sooner than own themselves beaten, will blister the shoulder. It is probable that horses suffer from rheumatism—and also toothache—more than people are aware.

RUGS

These should be as light and as warm as possible. Jaeger clothing is ideal but expensive. Care must be taken that the "roller," which keeps the rugs in place, is not girthed up too tight. A horse should be kept warm, but his stable must be well ventilated. Nothing is so conducive to coughs and colds as a hot stable, so always see that there is plenty of fresh air without draughts. A horse, after he is first clipped, will need

¹ Peroxide of hydrogen is useful for washing out a deep-seated cut with a small glass syringe. Iodoform is useful for healing up clean places. The well-known "Milton" makes a handy dressing for a wound.

a couple of rugs, and if the stables are very airy, and weather very cold, he may want a third. Should the horse's coat be perpetually "staring"—that is standing up on end—in the stable—it will mean he has not sufficient clothing on him, and an extra blanket must be added instead of shutting the window. Some horses feel the cold considerably more than others do. For obvious reasons it is economy to have two sets of top rugs—a strong "jute" rug, lined, for night-wear, with a more pretentious one for the day.

EXERCISE

Exercise, which is so necessary for the conditioning of a horse, should be given regularly—and according to the time of the season. Horses just off grass—say at the beginning of August—will need only an hour's walk for the first two weeks—but as the corn is gradually increased, so must the work be—until they are doing two and a half to three hours' trotting and walking a day, through the latter end of September and the whole of October. This, of course, must be supplemented with a certain amount of fast work, say cantering twice a week—and as the horse gets fitter, an occasional gallop, to get his "wind" right and keep him clean inside. Remember that trotting slowly up-hill improves the wind and down-hill the shoulders. There is no hard and fast rule about getting hunters fit; one must be guided by the condition of a horse's legs, how he is feeding, the state of the ground, etc.

Cantering work is essential to conditioning horses. It relieves the monotony of the daily routine, brings different muscles into play, helps clear the wind and does good to the respiratory organs; all fast work should be done by head man or the owner.

CLIPPING

The later horses are clipped the better their coats will "set" and the smarter they will look at the Opening Meet, but some horses sweat so freely that there is a danger of them catching chills, and they take hours to dry, and lose condition.

CARE OF HORSES AFTER HUNTING

If you are going to "do" your own horse after hunting, immediately he has got back to his stable take off his bridle and martingale—remove stirrup-irons, but not his saddle, and loosen his girths, get him to "stale," and then let him have his bucket of warm linseed-gruel—care being taken not to give this too hot—merely with the chill off. When he has drunk it, and should the day have been a cold and wet one, first dry his head, ears, and throat with a rubber—and sponge out his nostrils and dock, and then tie him up. Now give him a pound or two of hay to keep him quiet—do his head and body over lightly with a straw-wisp, and throw a sheet over his loins. Then set about his belly and legs, where most of the mud will have accumulated, with your wisp, and dry his heels. Now is the time to have a good look round for any thorns, cuts, or any other minor injuries—thorns must be pulled out, and take notice whether you get the whole of it or have left a bit of the end in the wound. Cuts, however slight, must be washed out with warm water, to which a little disinfectant has been added, until quite clean, and then dabbed with a little iodine. Having got so far take off his saddle and thoroughly dry his saddle-mark, rubbing well with the hand, to ensure good circulation to this part. This care of the back is *very* important, as nothing is more annoying than to find that your horse cannot "take his turn" owing to a saddle-gall. Too hurried a removal of the saddle, a lack of attention in drying and of well rubbing the seat of pressure, are predisposing causes of sore backs, galls, and scalds. This done, throw a rug over the horse to cover his whole body. Now wash his tail by placing the ends in a bucket, rinse, then wring, well shake out, and put on a tail-bandage. Next, wash out his feet, seeing at the same time that they are clear of any injury. Care must be taken when doing this not to wet the heels. This done the horse can be given his linseed-mash and left for a time to consume it in peace. After half an hour or so go back to him, see how he has got on with his mash; should he



Lady Dyrcebury, one of the finest judges of a horse in England, and who has given her time and energy to furthering the cult of the Horse, whether in the hunting-field or the show-ring



Mrs. A. H. Straker, for many years one of the best ladies in the Shires, riding a magnificent type of big, well-bred horse



Mrs. Hilton Green, a most perfect horsewoman, with a beautiful seat on a horse

Photo W. D. Rouch

have a plaited mane undo the plaits, strip him, and give him a good brush over with a "dandy"—removing the sweat-marks and mud, which have now dried and previously escaped the wisp. (Here let it be noted that if your horse has had a very hard day and is tired, do not worry him with too much "dressing," but merely get off the worst of the mud in the first instance, then examine him for thorns and wounds—treat these, make him as comfortable as possible and leave the rest until the morning.) You can now put on both his rugs, and give him his hay-ration. Before leaving the horse for the night, take a last look round him, to see that he has not "broken out" and that his ears are dry and warm—which they probably will not be—so then just "pull" them for a few moments with the palms of your hands, until they are dry and glowing. Give him his last feed—see that his rugs are comfortable and roller not too tight. Lightly bandage his legs all round with cotton-wool under them, remove the tail-bandage—see that he has a plentiful supply of water, and leave him for the night. A golden rule, do not clip your horse's legs, and never wash them on his return from hunting. This practice is one of the chief causes of mud-fever.

CARE OF HORSE BEFORE HUNTING

Be sure to examine his shoes all round the day before he goes hunting, to see that they are all on tight before the morning. This practice will often avoid the annoyance of casting a shoe out hunting—when a compulsory visit to the nearest blacksmith may cost you a Hunt. It is a good practice for a horse that is hunting on the morrow to have his night hay ration earlier than usual, and perhaps a smaller quantity. The deficiency in bulk may well be made up by a bit of extra corn. The morning of hunting, give him his first feed as early as possible, but, of course, no hay. This should then be well-digested before the hour of meeting. He should certainly have a little water.

A horse should be got ready for hunting as carefully and methodically, with as little hurry and fuss as possible, so that

he eats his breakfast well and starts with unflurried nerves. Sometimes there is time to give him two small feeds.

The day before he goes hunting it is a good thing to give a horse a short sharp gallop as a "pipe-opener," or, if he is being sent to the Meet by motor horse-box, it could be done in the early morning before breakfast. A "pipe-opener" is absolutely necessary to *clear his wind* if the horse has not hunted for five days or a week. If he has been hunted two days before it is not necessary.

MOTOR HORSE-BOXES, once the height of novelty and luxury, have come to stay and have been found by owners of quite small studs to be an invaluable asset in getting the maximum amount of hunting out of a small stud. The great advantage of a motor-box is that it is as easy to take two horses and hunt twenty miles away as it is to send them five miles by road, and it is possible to stay out on one horse all day till hounds go home with the comfortable assurance that your horse will be transported home warm, dry, and comfortable from whatever distance away you may find yourself. It always seems to be that last hour out of his stable that is so hard on a hunter. If you can get him home by half-pastfour he will come again with three days' rest quite easily, but if he is out till five or even six he will be relatively much more tired, his vitality lowered, and showing every sign of fatigue. Suppose, for instance, you intend to go to a Meet sixteen miles away—you can send your horse on by road; he will have to leave by 8.45 o'clock sharp in order to be comfortably in time for an eleven o'clock Meet, and even provided hounds do not get further away from home you will have to allow two hours to get him home, and in midwinter it is pitch-dark by five so that it will have been a terribly long day for him by the time he is back in his stable. Whereas, with a modern motor-box he would not need to leave till ten o'clock, giving time to walk the last half-mile, and as hounds will probably be going home about 3.30, you will be able to see the whole day's sport and yet have your horse home from anywhere within a radius of sixteen miles inside an hour, warm, dry, quiet, and probably his bridle off

munching a bit of hay, while the groom cleans the tack. One can go as far as fifty miles to a Meet and back and enjoy a whole day's hunting in a strange country with one horse and no untoward effect. The great things to remember are :

(1) That the box must be carefully driven and never too fast ;

(2) That it should not be taken right up to the Meet (unless the Meet perhaps is at a village or where there is plenty of room to turn round without blocking the road or upsetting other less luxurious hunting people) ; and

(3) It should wait for you at some central point where there is a telephone.

Here, perhaps, one should impress on a novice that at no time should one's car be allowed to follow, " come out to look for hounds," or be left at cross-roads in open country to make even a chance of heading a fox. All cars should have orders to wait at private houses or in a village where there is a telephone, then you can stop at the first post office you come to and tell the chauffeur where to meet you. Nothing looks worse, or is more annoying to other hunting folk, than to see rich cars with grooms and chauffeurs careering about the country *before* the end of the day.

People who have not owned a motor-box do not know how convenient they are—saving time and energy, which these days are money. It does not take horses long to get used to motor-boxes. If any horse is nervous at first it is a good plan to feed him in it once or twice. When they get used to it they show no concern whatever, and some even recognize their own box on the road.

STRAPPING. If you have men available it certainly helps to get horses fit if they are " strapped " twice a day. They clip out better and, of course, the strapping acts like massage on the muscles, toning them up, and circulating the blood.

SUMMERING HUNTERS. It is a moot point whether hunters do better turned out for part of the summer or whether they should be kept up in light work. It depends partly how early the owner begins serious hunting, on costs, facilities, grooms,

etc. Keeping horses up in small stuffy stables with an iron roof, can do them no good, neither can turning them out in a small field without shade. Horses feel the hot sun on their backs very much and it is not good for them. Flies can be very bad in the middle of the day and it is cruel to put hunters that have got manes and tails off in a field without a shed. They use a shed to get into the dark away from the flies. Horses do not mind cold or rain provided they have plenty to eat. Be sure that there is clean water, and a shed, and no loose strands of barbed wire in the place where several horses are turned out. Shoes should be removed—but horses with brittle feet are better with "tips" on the fore feet.

The grass is at its best from May till the end of June. After the middle of July the grass seeds and loses much of its goodness, and if there is not much keep left hunters should be given a small feed of oats daily. Unless a horse comes up big and well from grass it is difficult to get him into shape. It is much easier to take fat off, than to put it on with work. Some horses are very gross feeders and blow themselves out on grass, whilst others don't do at all well. Most hunters intended to be really fit for the opening Meet are got up the first week in August at latest.

Probably the ideal way to summer hunters is to run them out from 6 p.m. to 10 a.m. and then bring them in to stand in cool boxes where they get a feed¹ and hay, their feet can be picked and looked after daily, thus getting the benefit of both worlds—the exercise and the fresh grass as well as the attention of the stables. There is no doubt that hunters fed mostly on artificially stimulating food benefit much from a diet of fresh green grass, but if let right down they take much longer to condition, and sometimes there is greater risk to legs and wind. Whilst turned out horses' feet must be seen to by the smith once a month, and the first week they come up their teeth should be looked to, and if sharp or irregular must be rasped by the head man or vet. This is most important and many

¹ Freshly cut lucerne or vetch is very good for horses standing in stables in the summer. They rest the digestion.

horses fail to "do" because of a sharp-edged tooth preventing them grinding corn properly. Should the field get very bare at the end of the summer, two feeds and a small double handful of old beans will keep horses in good condition.

GROOMING

It is essential, not only for a horse's appearance, but for the sake of his health, that he should be well groomed. If a horse whose skin is clogged with grease has on the top of this two or three rugs, it is obvious that the pores of his skin cannot function properly, and this is all-important if we are to keep him in a good state of bodily health, ensuring his digestion, his kidneys and liver, are all functioning as Nature intended them to. One can spot the well-groomed, well-cared-for horse in a moment by the bloom he carries on his coat, his bright eye, and his general appearance of good health.

A horse in regular work should be groomed for forty minutes a day, and it cannot be done thoroughly under that time, and only by a man who knows his job. Thirty minutes' hard work after morning exercise, and ten minutes in the evening (a good wisp over when you change his clothing). The next essential to a good head man in a stable are good strappers—and they are in the minority. If you see a man at work at his horse with his coat on, however cold the weather, you can bet your horse is not being properly groomed, for if he sets about it in the right way, even if it is below zero, he will be warm enough in a very few minutes! The best tonic in the world is plenty of "elbow grease" applied to the outside of a horse's skin!—it will beat all the "quack" medicines one sees advertised, for bringing a "bloom" on a horse's coat, that you are invited to put inside him!

The skin of a horse in good health should move in ripples over the ribs if we extend our fingers and push them along his sides. If a horse is tight in his skin all is not well, and you must search for the causes, which are various. Faulty digestion, worms, incorrect, insufficient food, inferior forage, being

the primary causes—the three latter causes are easily overcome, and the judicious use of linseed oil and linseed will tend to loosen a horse's hide—this combined with really good strapping daily—and do not be satisfied with his condition unless you can get the effect of the ripples as stated, as it is an indication of good health and a good digestion; and no matter how large a quantity of food a horse may consume, if his skin remains tight, he will never "do." If the cause should be worms, that is a far more serious state of affairs, and must be dealt with as soon as their presence is detected. The small red worm is by far the most common, and if allowed to remain in their "host," burrow into and penetrate his intestines, even getting in the liver and kidneys and becoming absorbed in the blood-stream. A horse may be suffering from this trouble without any external signs except in his condition, and general dried-up appearance of his skin and coat. The reason being that the worm itself does not always get expelled with the manure, but merely the eggs, which are only visible under a microscope—so if you are suspicious of the presence of worms, send away at once a specimen of the horse's manure for analysis, and if this proves to be the trouble, a course of powders must be given; and by all means have his stomach pumped as well, but remember this will not get rid of all worms and eggs in his system if they are thoroughly established. Salt in plenty is an excellent thing, as much as a cupful of ordinary table salt given daily, mixed in three feeds, will do no end of good, and after a time this salt will be gradually absorbed into the horse's system, and make things very unpleasant for the red worm!

FEET. Don't forget a horse should have his feet "picked" out at morning and evening stables. Feet that are perpetually left dirty contract "thrush"—a disease of the "frog" that eats it away and prevents this valuable part of a horse's foot from being used as Nature intended, i.e. as a cushion, supplied to eliminate jar and concussion. This "frog" in a healthy foot should be bold and prominent, have no deep clefts or cracks in it, a healthy appearance, and no nasty smell. Some

blacksmiths, if allowed, will cut away the outer frog, thinking to give the foot a neat appearance after being shod. It is a pernicious habit, and not to be allowed in any case—nothing but the “rag” should ever be removed, and that cut cleanly off with a “searching knife.”

SHOEING

Particular care has to be taken in the shoeing of horses that “interfere” (hit themselves), which many horses are apt to do, especially if they turn out their toes, or are very narrow and “go close” in front. Such horses have to be shod “well in,” and the outer edge of the shoe rasped until smooth, and nicely “bevelled off.” Care must be taken in the shoeing of horses that are predisposed to corns, the last nail must not be too far back, putting pressure on the seat of corn from the shoes. Horses that already have corns can be shod with a three-quarter shoe. To avoid over-reaching, leave the toe of hind hoof a trifle “bold”—i.e. overlapping the toe of shoe, and be careful to “bevel off” the inner rim of shoe until quite smooth. This should always be checked by your head man when he goes round the horse’s shoes the day before hunting, and if worn sharp must be re-done. Remember the shoe should be made to fit the foot, not the foot made to fit the shoe.

BANDAGES are many and various, and all serve a useful purpose in their turn. There are :

No. 1. DRY FLANNEL BANDAGES.

No. 2. STEAM BANDAGES—i.e. wet flannel bandages soaked in boiling water and wrung well out, and a dry one placed on the top.

No. 3. COLD-WATER BANDAGES—a linen bandage soaked in cold water.

No. 4. BRINE BANDAGES—linen bandages soaked in cold salt water.

No. 5. VINEGAR BANDAGES, or “stoops” as sometimes called—these soaked in vinegar.

No. 6. PRESSURE BANDAGES—a dry flannel bandage with a liberal amount of wool underneath it.

No. 7. CRÈPE BANDAGES—useful as tail or surgical bandage.

No. 8. STOCKINET BANDAGES—an excellent dry bandage, and to use out hunting, as owing to its elasticity it fits better to the leg, and is more likely to maintain its position.

USES OF BANDAGES

No. 1 can be used at all times with benefit.

No. 2 for a leg that has heat in it—there is a saying "Fight fire with fire," and a good policy for a leg with heat in it, Use hot water.

Nos. 3 and 4. Very useful to freshen-up old legs, and keep them fine and at work.

No. 5. Vinegar is an absorbent, and will assist in reducing enlargements, inflammation, and generally "fining down" a horse's legs. Mixed with clay or whiting to a paste, and smeared on and left to dry, has a beneficial effect—also very good for all "bursal" enlargements.

No. 6. Probably the most useful of the lot, and are invaluable in keeping joints clean and free from "wind-galls," and generally freshening the legs. A liberal amount of cotton-wool is wound round the leg, and brought down low to overlap the joints. A dry flannel bandage is then applied on top and pulled tight. The wool will eliminate any fear of the tight bandage affecting the circulation. If an ordinary bandage is put on too tight without wool, and the string also too tight,¹ you will find on removing it in the morning, your horse has the appearance of a "bowed" tendon, the circulation having been interfered with. This can be reduced, of course, fairly easily, but frequently leaves a "knot" on the tendon.

THE USE OF BANDAGES OUT HUNTING

On occasions this is compulsory—for instance, when a horse has a "doubtful" leg, but you want him to take his turn—

¹ Safety-pins eliminate this risk.

then a pressure bandage will give him support and will be of great assistance. In a general way leave the bandages at home for stable use. For it must be remembered that, unlike racing, a hunter is a great many hours at work, in all conditions of going, and the man is yet to be born who can put on a bandage that, in really deep going,—especially in a country where plough predominates—will remain where it was intended to. If you wish to attempt this, it is better to have the bandage stitched up, after being put on, than to rely entirely on the strings.

Another great crab to bandages out hunting is that the wet mud which percolates in and round the edges, will take with it minute particles of grit and dirt, and it is no uncommon thing for a horse to go lame out hunting from this cause alone. For racing they are invaluable—you are only on your horse about a quarter of an hour, and very few present-day Point-to-Points are held over deep plough.

For a horse that hits himself or “brushes” badly, and cannot be rectified in his shoeing, one must resort to “boots”—of which there are various kinds. For ordinary “interference” a rubber ring may be worn which is very efficacious, and does not pick up the dirt.

TONICS

Most grooms are apt to be over-fond of expensive patent tonics and condition powders. These should not be necessary if hunters are regularly fed and cared for with sense, and considered as individuals and not machines, exercised sufficiently, and worked with a view to the next day as well as this—they should not require tonics. A little malt and cod-liver oil (cattle grade) is excellent for some horses, particularly in March, when they change their coats. Young horses thrive on a tablespoonful of cod-liver oil added to their ordinary feed, and they should also be given a small supply of iodine, which is so invaluable for inducing the growth of strong bone—in which some grass is very deficient.

Always remember it is not the one thing, but the hundred

and one things, that count with horses—intelligence, keenness, observation, and hard work. These attributes, combined with experience and plenty of common sense, go to make the man who should be placed in charge of either a large or small stud ; and should the owner have the same qualifications, so much the better, and work then becomes a pleasure, and a smooth going, well-run stable is the result.

There are various little "fads" one may try or adopt. For instance, a certain great horseman will not allow any of his horses' tails to be "pulled" where Nature gave a horse extra warmth for protection. Another good hunting woman, for the same reason, would not allow her groom to clip out the fluff *inside* her horses' ears, and the same one always had the few long "cat's hairs" on a horse's nose left undisturbed instead of being cut off as most grooms do, her idea being that a horse feels in the dark with these whiskers and they prevent him getting cast in his box or hurting himself at night in a strange stable.

The mistress must acquaint herself with the rudiments of stable science even if only for the purpose of seeing where the money goes ! And surely there is great pleasure in that daily visit to the stables. How nice to see beautiful heads pop out of boxes at the sound of your coming, how pleasant to rub those soft noses seeking dainties, to touch smooth satiny coats, to feel the firm muscles on perfect necks and those healthy cold legs. And the fascination of standing in the straw inspecting the new purchase, "the greatest horse whatever was seen !"

One of the best sounds in the world is the huntsman's horn blowing hounds away, the next best is the cry of hounds coming towards you, and the third best is the sound of your favourite hunter munching his supper when you pop round to his box in the dark after hunting to see if he has fed up properly after a marvellous day.

Remember, it is not the one thing but the hundred and one things that count.

CHAPTER VII

ON RIDING TO HOUNDS. HINTS ON JUMPING, REFUSALS, PUNISHMENT AND FALLS

“ If you can keep your head
When all around are losing theirs . . . ”

(KIPLING.)

“ Half the falls out hunting come from putting a horse crookedly at a fence and losing your head when he has made a mistake ”

(THE DUCHESS OF NEWCASTLE, 1895, *Women in the Hunting-field*.)

TO ride well to hounds it is necessary to be a good horsewoman, which, however, does not infer that every good horsewoman is first-class to hounds. In addition, the following qualities are essential :

(1) Judgment. This is most important. Knowing what to do, where to go, and what is going on ; being able to quickly make up your mind, weigh the pros and cons, and “ go for it ” without loss of time in a hunt.

(2) Coolness. It is no use getting excited or flustered out hunting. You upset your horse as well as other people, so that everything goes wrong. If you hear people being badly cross, it is likely they are merely frightened : people who are frightened of their horses, or the country, or of imaginary mishaps seem to react by getting angry with something or somebody else !

(3) Nerve is generally thought to be a gift of the gods. It is difficult to say. There are undoubtedly people born without nerves who are afraid of nothing and do not know what fear is. They are lucky, but somehow people without imagination of any kind lose a great deal of the adventure in living.

You sometimes hear So-and-so referred to as “ brave out hunting.” This is hardly a right description. A really good man or woman to hounds is undoubtedly courageous, but they would be the last to define themselves as “ brave,” “ bravery ” meaning doing something you do not like because

you ought—the V.C. sort of bravery. The real first flihters love hunting and "go" well because they love it, not because they must. The only brave people hunting are the horse copers, and those funkors, who hating every moment dare not be left behind. No, "nerve" better describes the type of courage required in a good woman to hounds. ("Nerves" is different altogether—at its best a tiresome complaint and at its worst a disease!) "Nerve" is a quality which, like most hunting attributes, can be acquired by diligent application if it is not natural. It depends largely on a healthy mind and body : if one is well, one is happy ; and if one is well and happy one delights in physical exercise, and the tiny spot of danger, reacting on mind and body in tune with the pace, the sparkle in the air, the music of hounds, the thrill of making quick decisions, the grey days, the black fences, the tall timber, "the feel" of a good horse, the dewdrops on the thorns, the instinct of Chase, and the thousand and one things which go to the making of delight in a day's hunting in the Twentieth Century.

Few people will take on a gate in cold blood—few good hunters will jump even a small brook in cold blood—it is almost as if the Chase were a sort of dope. Possibly the artificial stimulation acts on glands in the body and gives a super-vigour to both horse and rider. How else can one account for the stupendous leaps sometimes made out hunting over places that look impossible next day ?

With Judgment to decide what ought to be done, Coolness in carrying out the intention, and Nerve to throw the heart boldly over the obstacle, a good horsewoman will be with hounds fairly easily in all sorts of countries. Now and then she may find herself on a horse ruined by someone else, or come across the rare temperament in a hunter—a horse that hates hunting. A good horsewoman can adjust herself to the situation, and make the best of a bad job. The chance words, "that chestnut carried you well to-day," is a compliment that only the victim herself knows how well it is deserved ! There is pleasure in feeling a "bad ride" improve under one during a hunt as he gains confidence in your hands, judgment, and

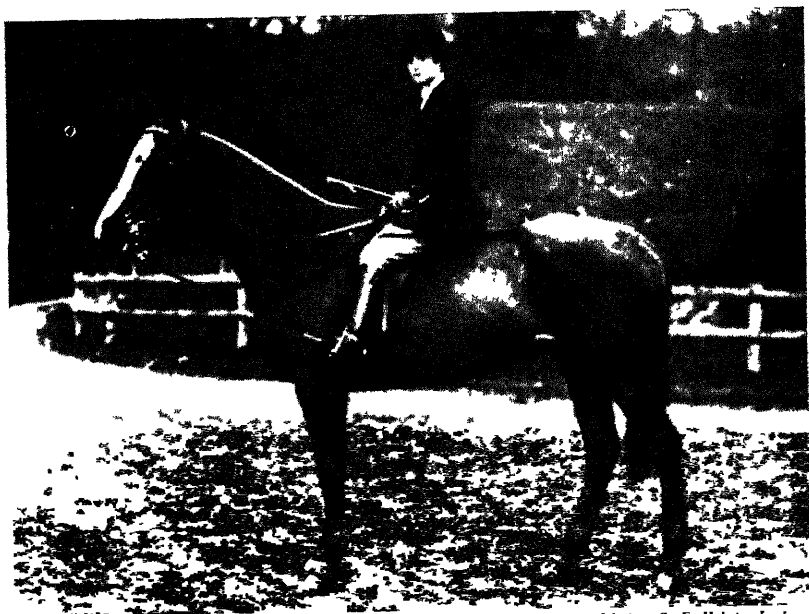


Photo G F White, Ludlow

Miss Monica Durne—very well known hunter in Warwickshire and elsewhere—has a particularly good seat astride and is a model of neatness



Photo W A Rouch

Lady Blanche Douglas, one of the best horsewomen in England and most knowledgeable on everything to do with hunting and horses (Riding "Kitten-on-the-Keys," winner of many prizes as a Hack. The smart show side-saddle without balance strap should be noted)

1



Mrs Charles Pym, well known in Leicestershire as one of the best women to ride a young horse to hounds

2



The Countess of Mount Edgumbe, one of the best pre-war riders, and undefeatable over the Pytchbeley country

3



Mrs Bortwick, one of the best in any country, with perfect hands and a beautiful seat on a horse

methods. There is Art in finding just the right-sized obstacles the first few fields to nurse such a horse along, and gradually make him bolder and bolder till he's giving of his best. Only the exceptionally good hunter will face a really big place in the first three fences and the whole art of keeping with hounds in most countries is getting *a really good start*. "Catching up" is difficult and upsetting to both horse and rider.

How does one get a good start? It is absurdly simple—so easy that any woman, young or old, well mounted or not, has an equal chance. The secret merely is *to be ready*! Ninety-nine out of every hundred making up the average Field never learn this secret. They gossip, they smoke, they sit about on their horses, they don't listen, they don't look, their horses are unbalanced, they aren't ready, with the result that when hounds do find, and the Field Master lets the pent-up crowd go, the ninety-and-nine in the rear are trying to pull themselves together, cursing their bad start, intent only on following those in front like a flock of silly sheep—and indeed the noise of their going is such that it is quite impossible to hear hounds at all!

Let us take a ride with Diana—she is fairly well mounted on a rather small grey horse, with one doubtful leg and a reputation for pulling. She has got a flying start by snuggling up as close to the gate as possible and the anxious Field Master, all ears and eyes. She knows that her mount takes hold—she lets him go with the barest possible touch in the reins—any rough handling would send him mad—she is not afraid of galloping and at the far end of the field he will be easier to steady. Tail-hounds are coming on as hard as they can to catch up with the body of the pack settling down nicely to the line. D. gives them a wide berth, keeping down-wind and a little to one side, her eyes on the leading hounds, her senses alert to everything going on, ready in an instant to stop, to turn, or hurry on. Watching *leading* hounds is the secret of riding well to Hounds. Most people who look at hounds at all have their eyes somewhere in the *middle* of the pack. By watching the *leading* hounds you will gain those precious seconds of early information which make all the difference. Whenever hounds check

it is essential to *stand still*, not merely stop and wander about as one so often sees. It may not matter now and again, but if you do so others will, and when the huntsman has to cast his hounds on a bad scenting-day it is worse than maddening to have an ignorant, chattering crowd following him about. Stand still, with your horse's head facing the way hounds are feathering, watch leading hounds and again you will be off before the others have seen anything at all!

Always have your eyes open, and be looking ahead and thinking. As you jump into a field, get into the habit of looking for the way out; it will save all that time wasted riding up and down seeking for a place to jump.

As the fences come along Diana will pick her place in plenty of time. She looks out for bad going, saves her horse up-hill, in heavy going, she puts him straight and square at his fences. The ignorant search in vain for somewhere to jump in a long, straggling, overgrown fence—some time back she has already selected that blackest patch near the thorn tree, because *there* the crest of the ridge-and-furrow offers the soundest take-off, whereas the smaller place, a hundred yards to the right, had a sharp-pointed stake in it that might damage a horse. Diana does not fear falling, but unnecessary falls lose one a hunt and may disable a horse. Few women can stand a lot of bad falls without losing their nerve or getting seriously hurt, and the kind of woman who goes crashing about into the most unlikely sort of places is a nuisance, which is very different to taking on a real big place because that is the only way. Few good women to hounds knowingly take risks as such, but they have a knack of quickly weighing up possibilities and selecting the best chance. It is better to jump a large place with a good take-off than a smaller one with a boggy, uneven, or slippery bit of ground in front of it.¹

¹ Try jumping yourself under such circumstances. It is almost impossible to jump over a wide ditch if you are afraid of slipping or catching your toe, and if you do happen to do either of these things when taking off you are almost certain to fall, or, anyhow, pitch forward. If, in addition, you are carrying a weight, it becomes ten times more difficult, and the weight is certain to tip off!

This judgment of the take-off is not nearly so necessary in the galloping grass countries of Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, and Warwickshire, where the going is so perfect that all down a fence one spot is as good as another (provided always that you ride a bold horse), but in provincial countries good horsemanship and quick judgment of a practised eye are essential to keep in the first flight near Hounds. It is a delight to watch the finest amateur huntsman in England picking out the best places in each fence as it comes, whether big or little, banks, ditches, or timber—he takes them all. The ignorant gape and wonder how he does it. Some say he knows every fence in the country, others that he has such super-horses, others that he is so brave—but if you watch very carefully you will find the one secret of his magic, that he looks all the time for the best take-off to give his horse the best chance, the horse is confident, tries his best, and almost invariably gets over.

A second invaluable tip to the beginner is to go slow at the majority of obstacles—unless hounds are running very fast over a line of country as perfect as the Belvoir Vale, or on occasions when you have reason to believe that mighty big ditches lurk on the landing side. If you watch those *invariably* in the front with hounds you will notice them some distance away from the obstacle steady their horses. This is called “collecting.” After you have collected your horse and “put him right,” never interfere with his mouth for the last few strides before he takes off. When hounds are running fast and the going is good, do not be afraid of galloping but collect your horse in time before each fence.

Of course, one must consider the type of obstacle, individual horses, whether there is a hurry, and so on, and it is always dangerous to generalize in any subject—let alone hunting—but so far as it is possible to give a general rule to the novice about jumping fences in the first flight hunting it is TO GO ON THE SLOW SIDE. The reasons being :

(1) That your horse is more “collected,” that is with his hocks well under him, the position which, owing to natural

conformation, gives him the best chance to use his muscles to the best advantage for jumping.

(2) Most horses can spread themselves to a remarkable extent even from a standstill, hardly guessed by loosely galloping fools.

(3) If your horse does make a mistake going slowly, you will probably be able to sit tight and he will be able to recover himself, whereas had you been galloping uncollected, a slight mistake would have shot you on out of the saddle.

(4) A horse can look where he is going, which he cannot do so well jumping fast.

(5) If the horse does come down, it will ninety times out of a hundred only be a cushy fall done at a slow speed, and you will be able to keep hold of your horse, as well as not hurting yourself; a fall at full tilt is apt to be much more painful. Now and again, of course, there is the exception to the rule, and someone going too slowly falls into a big ditch on landing with the horse on top, but it is very seldom that happens. Moreover, "going slowly" does not mean walking up to a large obstacle and poking your horse's nose into it while holding his head with a tight rein!

The proper pace for a nice fly fence with a fair ditch on the far side is "a little faster than a canter," said a famous Leicestershire man to hounds. Very probably for a fence with a blind ditch to you something much slower than a canter is necessary, and one may often give a horse the best chance at a big bank topped with a trappy fence, by trotting up to it.

The great thing to remember all the time is to give your horse the best possible chance, by having him collected before you come to the fence, then letting him "go on" at it with a nice free head. (See *Jumping*, page 189.)

After getting a good start, picking the best places at the obstacles which come in her way, taking things slowly rather than fast, D. is probably well away, with hounds in company, with the huntsman and some half-dozen *invariable* first flighters. One lays stress on the "*invariable*" because we all know the flash-in-the-pan type, the "squirters," men and

women who ride well one day and not the next. What we aim at in a good woman to hounds is someone who can take the rough with the smooth, fair days and foul, and be there in spite of everything at the end of every hunt. One day, mounted on a pony, she may have to creep and crawl, jump off and run up-hill, or "double" the big rasper, and be up to a hundred little dodges to keep her small conveyance on his legs, and another day, riding the most valuable of hunters, go soaring over gates, rivers, and great black fences. Lucky are you to find yourself on your best horse, feeling your best and he at his best all at the moment that hounds find scent at its best on the best of foxes in the best of countries. It can't last long, it mayn't last ten minutes, but one "crowded hour of glorious life" crammed like compressed air of paradise into those few brief minutes, and tragedy if you are not ready, or if you have not the knowledge to take full advantage of what the gods offer!

After this digression, we return to D. and the point we left her and the M.F.H. jumping average obstacles in an average hunt. Still noting their methods, we might point out that they both ride *straight* at their fences. Too often one sees people putting their horses anyhow at a place or even zig-zagging from side to side; no horse can jump his best this way, and is only too likely to slip, hit himself, or stumble.¹

Whenever possible one should jump well away from the crowd with probable refusers, kickers, appalling manners and ignorance on the part of others making unnecessary dangers in the hunting-field. The good woman to hounds is seldom a danger to anyone else.

D. is putting her grey straight at a nasty fence with a blind ditch on the far side. He is nicely collected, she gives him a good squeeze with her leg a few yards from the fence to show him he is to do something extra, and then she lets him have full use of his head; if he lands a trifle short leaving his hind-legs a little in the blind ditch, being rather a stupid little horse (hopeless, in fact, in less competent hands), she may even

¹ See "Golden Rules," page 205.

"throw him the reins," in order to give him the best possible chance of recovery, by leaving his head free, at the same time leaning forward (quietly, without swaying, lifting hands, making noises, or jerking reins) so as to lighten his back and give him a chance to get his hind-legs out of trouble.

Just to the right jumps a young man on a big raking horse, the latter overjumps himself and pitches on his nose. The young man is thrown forward, jobs his horse in the mouth, loses his balance and tumbles off; luckily he keeps hold of the reins and is soon on again. D.'s grey does the same thing at the very next fence, blundering badly on landing, but as she



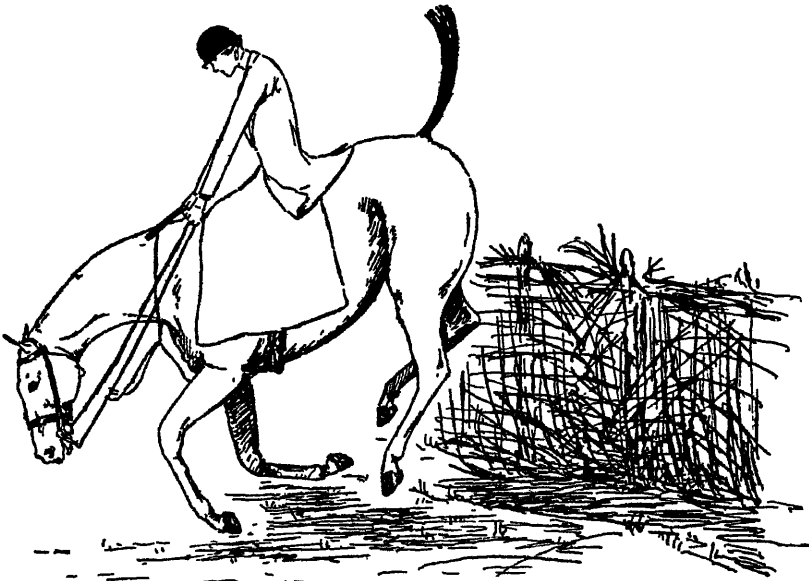
When to leave him alone.

sits still, leans back to lighten his fore-hand and with firm light hands on the reins helps him to regain his balance, as it were, lifting him back on to his legs.

A horse does most of his balancing by the disposition of his head—and one can help him regain his balance by taking hold of it and other times leaving it free—*provided always the rider is balanced herself*. This is easier written than done if you are riding astride, but side-saddle it is easy to save a horse that has pecked badly on landing.

The next obstacle is a long straggling fence in which there are gaps "made up" with stout timber. Quickly noting rabbit holes, the huntsman and D. jump the rails where the take-off is sounder. The others jump the fence, someone's

horse comes down in a hole ; the rider gets up unhurt, but the horse has evidently strained a fetlock. At the next, the same young man, full of confidence after the last obstacle, " takes on " another post-and-rails, but D., noting this time that the take-off had been " poached " by cattle running up and down during the summer, instead puts her grey at the bigger fence and gets over, while the young man takes a toss, luckily escaping a " crumpler " as the top bar broke.



When to hold a horse up

However, he has to stop to retrieve his hat and is out of the hunt.

On they go, not running so fast now. They are coming to a road. Anticipating a check, D. begins to pull up and makes for the gate in the corner. The huntsman goes on with his hounds of course, but is followed by two riders who jump behind him into the road, where hounds immediately throw up.

This is just what D. had expected—she has opened the gate, and is standing still watching hounds while the Field Master " curses " the two people who jumped into the road—not only

for riding too close on top of hounds, but also for knocking about a boundary fence. One of the pair has made a hole large enough to let out cattle into the road.

"Shouldn't wonder if there'll be wire up next time," growls the M.F.H. to D., still fuming.

"It will be all right, it's Mr. X's farm," says D., but mentally she makes a note to call round on Mr. X at the first opportunity to talk about the repair.

"Riding on top of hounds like that . . . if only they'd followed you to the gate," groans the harassed M.F.H.

Hounds are feathering over the road into the field beyond, but the Master rides down the road to the gate, where he holds everybody up, briefly pointing out the long stretch of barbed wire running the length of the pasture.

"See what comes of smashing fences!"

"First-rate scent," says D., ever anxious to save rows, her eyes on the bitch pack famous for their drive and nose. "Lilian has it!"

The little group considerably augmented by the second and third ranks who, delighted to have had this first chance to catch up, are crowding round the gate where the Master, still ruffled by the behaviour of the two miscreants, has perhaps help up the Field a trifle longer than he would otherwise have done.

There is a wild surge as he swings open the gate. D., collected and ready, is off the mark at once, her grey galloping his best with a nice free rein. She has her eye on a place in the opposite side of the field and makes for it, while the majority follow the Master to the gate which has just slammed behind the huntsman. D. knows she is well placed. Hounds are running and she is as usual on the down wind side where one can hear even if one can't see. The country now is less easy, smaller enclosures, and big, uncut, untidy fences making it difficult to see ahead. D. goes on, over a stile and through a bit of a bullfinch till, hearing the horn on her left and just ahead, she takes a half-turn, jumps on and off a bank to the near side of that big ash tree and finds herself as she expected, in

the same field as hounds. (In a side-saddle never jump to the right of a tree, as if the horse happens to swerve, your legs may get hurt. Always avoid jumping under or near trees if you can.)

The pace is fast enough in this intricate country ; obstacles follow each other in swift succession. The little grey is clever at banking, quite good over timber, he is fit, and enjoying himself.

"A grand hunt," says a young farmer.

"I hope Mickle Wood is stopped," says someone else.

On they go, sure enough the fox is making for Mickle Wood ; two people crash on the right, one over timber on a bank, at which it was silly to ride on a tired horse, the other slips up in a gap. D. has been going through gates where she can, her little horse is a bit blown, and there hasn't been a check long enough to ease him. Here they come out on to a road ; the opposite field is young wheat.

"'Ware wheat !" warns the Master.

Some turn right, some left. D. turns right—it is more down wind, the fox must be nearly beat. Mickle Wood will certainly see the end of the hunt, but D. knows of old a certain drain that he may well be making for instead—also perhaps she welcomes the opportunity of giving the grey a breather on the road.

It is extraordinary how a half-mile gallop along the side of the hard road will revive a tired horse. Have you ever tried it yourself beagling ? D. noted that the tarmac surface was wet, which is not as slippery for horses as on a dry day, but she kept her horse collected, looked out for broken bits of glass, tin cans, and "grips" (the little channels cut to drain water off the edges of the road), and at the first possible moment turned aside with three others and jumped into a big pasture. This may sound bad after the Master's recent wiggling, but here the circumstances were different. The field was *empty* of stock, there were only four riders, and hounds were running hard. Moreover, all four knew that their horses would jump clean and *each took their own place*. It is the practice

drift away to eat lunch, smoke a cigarette, change horses and gossip intimately as is their custom. D. has had her bit of lunch, she has pulled up her girths, she is chatting to Captain X and two others, but quietly, and the attention of them all is concentrated on what is going on inside the wood.

X's horse, another young one, is excited and won't stand still, jingling his bit—and D. suggests he should go inside up the ride and listen. He goes to the far bend and they watch him for some minutes. Suddenly, he lifts his hat from his head, hounds open in the far side, the Whipper-in disappears from his corner. D. dashes down the ride with her companions hard as they can go, but looking out for stubs, holes, and boggy patches. The wood seems endless, but they eventually reach the far side, where a gamekeeper is holding open the gate and hounds are disappearing into the next field, where a line of willows marks the Blackwater Brook. D. knows it well, fourteen feet open water, and she knows the exact spot she means to jump it! Her dark brown mare likes water, but she likes to go on and not stop. There is only one place that has a really good take-off and D. knows that others know it, and she sees crowds converging on that place from all sides. The huntsman and the First Whip are over. D. sits down and leaning forward rides her hardest—racing for a place. She judges it nicely—few people can gallop harder when she wants to and the brown mare loves nothing better. Others, not so sure of themselves or their horses or the place, are not in such a hurry. Beating X and a few others she steadies the mare, sensibly pricking her ears at the smell of water, and then lets her slide along, and they are over! Two others also on her left, X on his young one to the right—with a scramble and a fall, the Master and one or two others behind her, then "splash" goes someone bang in the middle, another refuses and yet another slips in, and the rest come to the conclusion—some, that friends must be fished out, and others, that the ford is lower down. For two fields the little party has it to themselves, the brown mare fencing faultlessly, but, alas, an unenterprising fox pops to ground in a drain under a gateway.

Captain X rides off for a terrier as the Master decides to try and bolt the fox. D. dismounts and smokes a cigarette while the crowd rides up well pleased with its manœuvre at the ford. As the terrier is put in, D. remounts, stepping off a bit of rising ground on to her side-saddle quite easily; she has trained this mare to stand stock still. Most of the Field are walking about chattering, and some are off their horses with their backs turned to the drain. For some minutes nothing happens, but suddenly again all is commotion; the fox has bolted, old Priestess nearly got him, but away he went, quite easily the most unflurried person there.

This field is wired all round. D. is already half-way to the hand-gate and gets through among the first half-dozen; hounds racing in view are pouring into the next field.

“Ware seeds!” shouts the Master.

D. and others make a detour round the headland as close to the hedge as possible. The far gate is locked—quick as lightning the First Whip and Captain X are off and together putting their backs into it, lift it off its hinges, D. holding their horses.

D. waits till both have remounted, making the brown mare stand. The busy Master is telling people to take care not to ride over the gate lying on the ground—gates cost money.

This little interlude has taken valuable time. D. last heard hounds slightly left, she turns in that direction—not a sound! But look there, on ahead cattle bunched in a corner proclaim the fact that hounds have passed that way! Galloping on through an open gate, over the next small fence, into a grassy lane, which way? Her quick eyes note fresh hoof-marks to the right and down the lane they splash—mud to the ears, impossible to hear. A half-open gate, more fresh marks, so D. turns into the field, the fox is running a large half-circle back to Mickle Wood. Riding on the inside, she hopes to nick in. Quite right, there is the horn! Over a small stile, and hurrah! Hounds are hunting along the far ditch. Standing still, she watches them one by one. Hark! A halloa! An excited countryman has seen the fox.

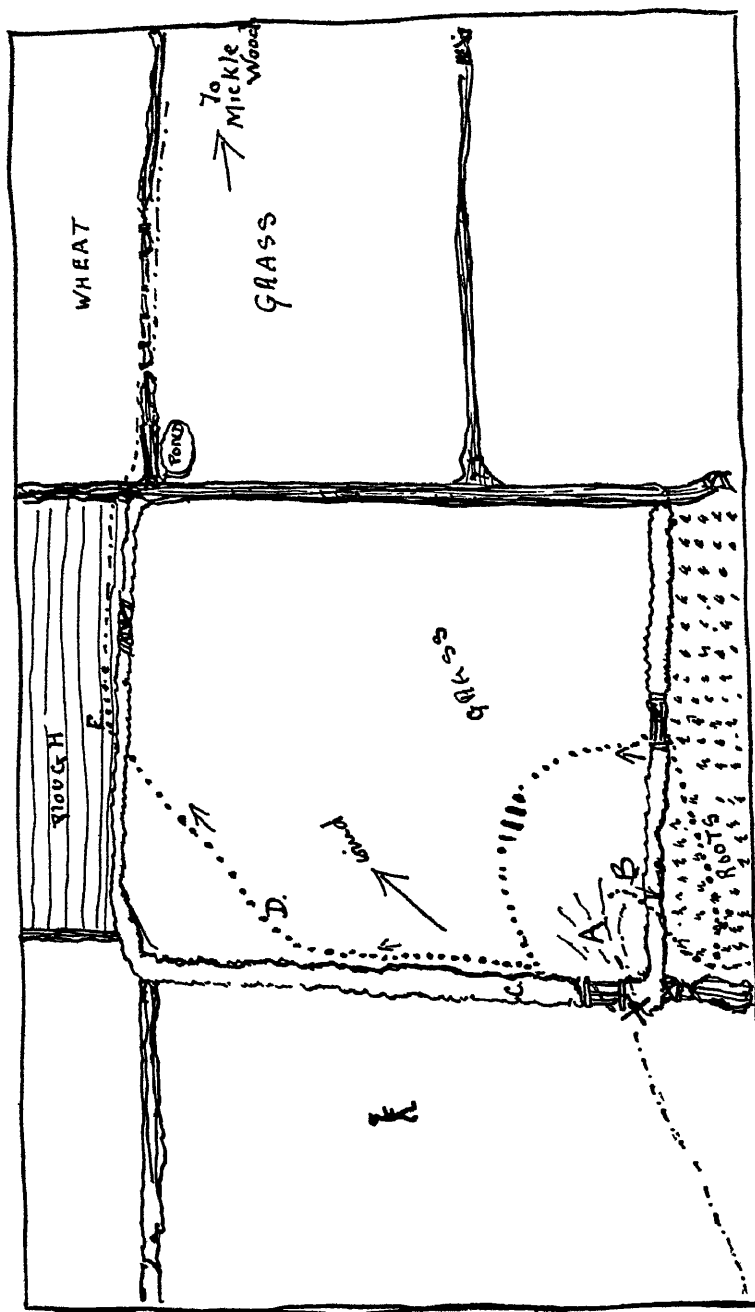
"Which way did he go?" asks the huntsman.

"I seed 'un go through by yon big oak," yells the man pointing a pitchfork at the far hedge.

D. quickly feels in a side pocket, pulls out a shilling and drops it into his hand, "A little drink to fox-hunting to-night," she says, hurrying on.

Old Catchem quietly holds hounds on towards the spot indicated, and they hit off the line where the fox went through the hedge with a fine cry and come on into the grass field where almost immediately they throw up; the fox has evidently turned short to one side or another. The Master is curbing the impetuosity of the Field who were coming surging through the gateway wellnigh on top of hounds. "STAND STILL!" he roars.

D. watches Old Catchem with interest. What has the fox done? D. knows that a fox often jinks sharply directly he is out of sight of someone he knows has viewed him (one reason why you should not holloa directly you see a fox), she also knows that a fox generally turns down wind, but would he be likely to turn towards the man who was hollering like mad, might he perhaps be lying down in the root field yonder? Catchem stands like a rock—D. knows that above all he loves to see his hounds work out a puzzle for themselves, but on this occasion they had not had proper time to settle down to hunt and heads are soon up. As soon as old Lilian lifts her wise head and looks at him as if to say, "You try now," Catchem goes quietly forward and D. watches to see what he will do. One note on the horn as he turns up wind, hounds fly to him and he casts them in front of his horse past the gateway where the crowd are pressing, through the fence into the root field beyond. D. guesses that he tries this side first as the steaming horses will quickly foul the scent should the fox have turned this way. Time is everything in killing foxes. Catchem jumps the low fence with hounds and trots quickly round making good the grassy headland, the hedgerow and the corner of the root field. He knows that there is a very fair scent—had bad scenting conditions prevailed he would have



- X Point where fox was viewed by man.
- A Hounds casting
- B Huntman's cast.
- C Where fox had run down the ditch.
- D Where "Truthful" spoke.
- E Line recovered —> The wind.

made his cast at a walk. He goes back through a gate opened by his Whipper-in, the bitches in front of him, every nose to the ground working a big half-circle beyond the spot where they checked and on down wind. D. watches, but all along the hedge there seems nothing doing till suddenly Truthful shows signs of interest. Catchem holds them on and D. sees Truthful and then Priestess hurry excitedly along the thick, brambly fence—could they, would they own it? The crowd were mostly chattering like magpies and had seen nothing. D. edged slightly forward and was ready. A whimper from Priestess declared the recovery of the intoxicating smell to her friends and relations, who quickly drive on in joyous agreement with her opinion.

"He must have crawled along the bottom of the ditch," Captain X said as he and Diana galloped on well ahead of the jostling crowd, some of whom the Secretary was begging not to smash up the roots.

They jumped the next wall side by side looking out for the pond in the corner, which someone coming behind failed to do and went "plomp" in. Keeping clear of some young wheat they kept on, but unfortunately in the next field some excited cattle had charged over the line and the huntsman again had to hold hounds on forrard while Captain X and the Whipper-in kept the bullocks back by cracking their whips. This was made a more difficult task by some of the ignorant members of the Field not watching what was going on, riding among the frightened beasts, some of whom clambered through the fences, whilst others galloped about to the consternation of their owner. Had all the riders kept quietly together alongside the fence, leaving the rest of the field open to them, this would not have happened.

Hounds were now some time behind their fox. His point is evidently Mickle Wood, but D. watched with interest how huntsman and hounds straightened out the line, past that haystack, along the cart track, under the gate in the corner, through the next field spread with manure, necessitating Catchem again lifting hounds. Thereafter he did not touch them,

and it was a pretty sight to see them hunting on, making good every inch of the line on their own, the remaining two miles to the covert. D., with some others, kept to the cart track through a line of gates, missing nothing, but deeming the pace not good enough to warrant jumping unnecessary fences. Not so with the rest of the Field—they careered on over the country, crashing some rails here, making gaps there, and one young lady in the rear, endeavouring to “catch up” led a select party of admirers across a “seed field.” Luckily it was not a wet day, and the field was second ley, so not much damage was done, except to the appearance of the field, but it would have been all the same to them!

Another little lot on the left, taking a line of their own direct to Mickle Wood, set a lot of ewes in lamb quite unnecessarily galloping about their pens; the Secretary was in time to stop two people, who ought to have known better, larking over the sheep hurdles, as if hurdles were of no other use!

The M.F.H., justly incensed by all this, herded his followers to the north side of the covert, partly to prevent a fox breaking on that side and running a line over the same piece of country.

“Quite enough damage done for one day.”

However, many of the Field had now tired themselves and their horses sufficiently and decided to break off the Chase, others disliking what they called “woodland hunting,” and some thinking of other engagements—one way and another the little company at the cold corner got smaller and smaller until the Master, with a twinkle in his eye, looked around him happily.

“Soon we shall be enjoying ourselves,” he said.

He was right. Suddenly Captain X lifted his hat—a fox had crossed the ride in front of him, and for the next fifteen minutes there was a glorious crash of music, hounds close to their fox, a fresh one and running with a great cry up and down the big wood—Old Catchem dashed about the rides here, there and everywhere—the Master had taken up a post of vantage in the centre. D. kept with them, feeling in her bones that scent was improving every minute as the wind died down

and a tang in the air gave promise of frost to come. Indeed, it had been bitterly cold waiting on the north side, and it was good to feel the blood tingling into the finger-tips again as the brown mare skurried up and down the rides. Twice D. viewed the fox and at length, when he went away with hounds bang on his brush, she was there,—all the hounds on—Old Catchem "doubling" his horn in his inimitable way; just about twenty of the "right" people, the cream of the country before them, and a perfect start! What greater thrill can life offer?

The fox broke this time on the opposite side to the Blackwater Brook. The first fence was a whopper—a big stake-and-bound with a ditch to them, and the next was wider still, with an arm of the same brook on the far side. It was approached down-hill, and with hounds running hard up the slope on the opposite side, the leaders took it at racing pace landing far out on the other side. D. was well on the left, her brown mare well balanced and collected, jumping faultlessly. Gaining the rise they found hounds streaming on, running beautifully together on a breast-high scent. The brown mare was going well within herself, saved up-hill, hurried down, her owner picking out her places in each fence with faultless judgment. Once only did D. think of trouble—a trappy place with a blind ditch on the take-off side. The brown mare, always keener to gallop on than to creep and crawl, had to be checked and made to jump off her hocks. Another time, scrambling down a bank into a lane, D. sat back, gave the mare her head, and made her slide cleverly down, changing her feet on the grass verge. An awkward scramble up the other side, then on, over more grass fields with perfect going and perfect fences one after another without a strand of wire.

The company was now reduced to eight, well up but only just able to keep with hounds, the pace was so good. The next field was ploughed and D. eased the brown mare by riding the length of a furrow, but, nevertheless, she slightly touched the stone wall jumping out on the far side. Hounds had got a field ahead and D. had to ride the brown mare all out

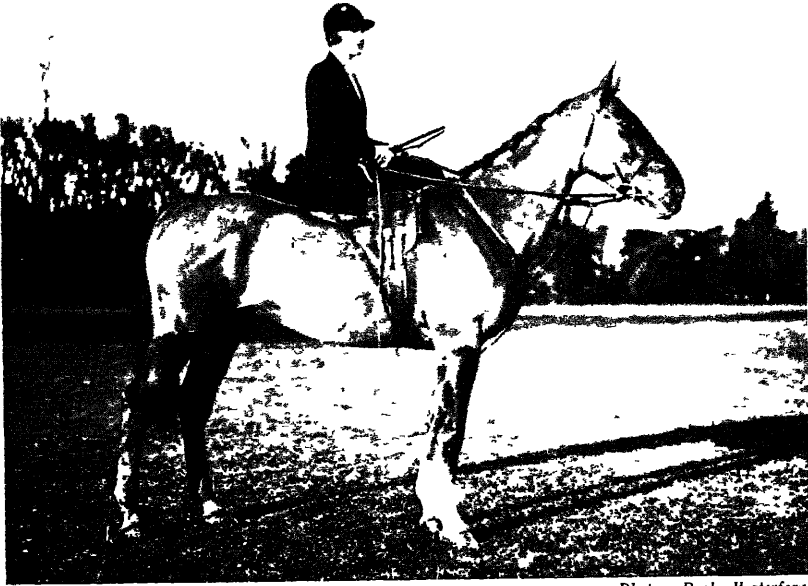


Photo Poole, Waterford

*Miss Dorothy Musgrave, well known in Ireland as a very good judge of a horse and a fine rider
For several seasons Master of the West Waterford and has hunted hounds herself
Here riding "Home Chat," winner of forty point-to-points*



Photo J & E Cox, Ripon

Mrs W W Burdon, one of the very best over a country in the North of England



Photo "Irish Times"

Mrs Baggally, equally good on a green youngster over Co Meath, riding a finish, or in the show-ring Here seen on "Cottage Pie"



Photo W D Moss

The Duchess of Beaufort, who goes consistently well in any hunt, and has an excellent eye for country.

without losing an inch of ground to get to them again. More and more fences, skirting a boggy patch in the next field she saw a stout but possible piece of timber into the field that hounds were now streaming across, and in the near distance someone was hollering like mad. D. quickly weighed up the chances—everyone else turned aside but the brown mare loved timber, and riding her as well as she knew how D. put her at it, took her off on the right spot, at the same time kicking her left foot out of the stirrup in case of a fall—cleared too beautifully, but it had been a risk with a tiring horse. At that moment there were a tearing and a worry. Hounds had killed their fox in the open, a six-mile point in seventeen minutes without a check. . . . What fun it had been !

Then Home . . . “Good Nights” all round. For some distance D. rode along quietly behind hounds, discussing the day, the hounds, the country, and other things with the Master and Captain X.

The short winter afternoon was drawing to a rapid close as the hounds jogged through the villages. The sun hung a red ball low in the sky, lights were appearing in cottage windows, the church bells were pealing for a practice, small boys ran along beside hounds calling, “’Ow many foxes did you ketch, Mister ?” Labourers going home on bicycles nodded cheery “Good nights,” others walking stopped to ask if they had had a good day, and women and babies came to the doors. At the cross-roads, her way being left-handed, D. jogged on the next two miles with Captain X, the two tired horses going better in company, till he, too, had to turn off for home, and D. continued the last three miles by herself.

But not feeling lonely. It is a poor soul that cannot ride home from hunting alone in the gloaming without pleasure. The tired mare plodding quietly, her mind intent on her tea ; the amber glow of the winter sunset, the thorn hedges like black lace against the sky, the dull crimson of the holly berries, the twittering birds retiring to cosy nooks in the hedgerows chattering quietly as people do, a flight of starlings overhead, and as D. steadied down to a walk for the last mile

and a half, one—then two—stars twinkled in the clear darkest part of the sky; rooks cawed in the topmost beeches in the copse, smoke curled upwards from the valley, a dog was barking somewhere a long way off, a motor-car with glaring headlights like an ancient dragon spouting fire turned the evening into midday, then into deepest black. It was getting cold but it was lovely, still part of a great day; with the satisfactory memory of the last hunt in her mind, body comfortably tired, a sense of well-doing and not a little hungry, D. was in just that rare spiritual mood which makes the individual feel so completely in harmony with Nature, in tune with the Infinite. The sensation is uncommon in these days of hurry, but there is no better time than riding home from hunting alone with a favourite horse and one's thoughts. Perhaps one's ears tingle with memories of hounds and one almost can hear the horn—or is it a fairy horn, or echo of the horns of long ago? Maybe far out of sight a gaggle of wild geese are speeding south, maybe some huntsman and his ladye of ancient days are hunting their ghostly hounds in the dark quiet woods and one can catch the distant cries of "The Hunt is Up! Tally-ho! Tally-ho . . .!"

As Diana turns into the old stable-yard Sirius glows in the blue-velvet sky, two waiting terriers rush to meet her with excited yaps and the brown mare walks straight for her own box where a nice warm drink will be coming in a bucket.

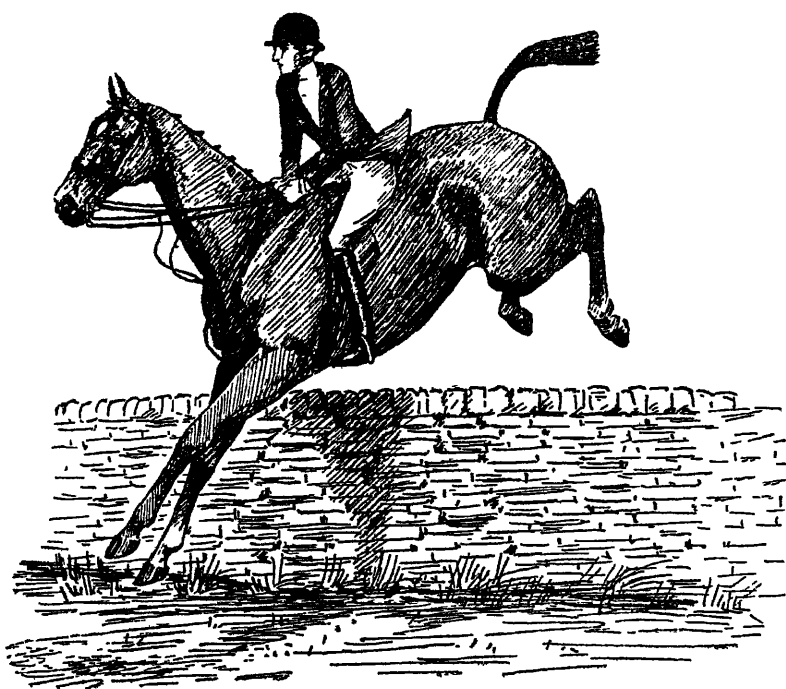
"What will you ride to-morrow, m'lady?"

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D., followed by leaping dogs, passes on into the house and shuts the door. Above in the black gleaming lacquer screen covering Time and Space—a pale gold crescent moon hangs in the mantle of Night—symbol of Artemis, "Diana the Huntress," call her what you will in this Age of Science, remaining the same as of Old—augury of the Morrow.

HINTS ON JUMPING OUT HUNTING

The art of riding at a fence, and how to sit when your horse jumps, is a most difficult subject to write on. It is also not always easy to carry out in reality, if done in the correct way. You will find that the man or woman who consistently goes well out hunting, has very few falls during a season ; and they



The right way.

are always good riders. Many bad riders go brilliantly, but they will take many falls, unless they ride exceptional horses. You can usually save yourself several in a season's hunting, if you anyhow know the sort of pace to go at the various obstacles generally met with in most countries. For instance, if you let your horse, or encourage him, to go "all out" and "uncollected," at the kind of "gaps" met with in many provincial countries, consisting of a "greasy" bank with a very "blind" ditch towards you, and a "poached" take-off,

you are pretty certain to take a fall ; even on a good, "made" hunter—or conversely if you trot your horse up to a fence with a good wide ditch the far side.

You should not go too slowly at anything high. Some people say, "go slow at timber," but you need a certain amount of pace at high timber, or at a good "cut and laid" fence with a ditch towards you. In fact you can generally go fairly fast at most Leicestershire fences. Of course, horses vary a good deal ; some jump better going fast at their fences—others going slow. Except at very "blind" trappy places, if you are riding a "made" horse that is keen and likes to "go on" at his fences, it is much better to let him, and not interfere with him, anyhow in the last few strides, before he takes-off. What we have already said, pages 60-64, *re* riding with nice long reins and giving your horse a free head, applies strongly to jumping. Sometimes, at a ditch towards you, it is difficult not to touch your horse's mouth if you think he has got his stride wrong, but a clever old horse will generally look after himself, and put himself right. Some very clever horses will do this by jumping a bit to the right, or to the left. If you hang on to your horse's head jumping he is much more likely to hit things in front. High walls are one of the most difficult things to ride at—especially when the stones are poisonous, and you know that if your horse touches one he may cut himself and get blood-poisoning, which may lay him up for weeks, or give him a big (and sometimes stiff) knee for life. Some people go a fair pace at walls—others trot at them. The high-class, impetuous sort of horse is very often most difficult to ride at walls, or to know what pace to let him go at them. Common horses that will trot up to, and "buck" over them, generally make the best wall-jumpers, but any horse in time will learn to be careful and not to hit them—however, sometimes it is an expensive lesson ! The ideal to aim at is a seat and hands like the photographs, Plates 24 and 25, allowing a horse full freedom of his head, without losing the precious contact with his mouth.

For a woman riding side-saddle there is very little she can

do to make a horse take-off at the right moment, except give him a kick, and she is very handicapped in this way, and has to rely mostly on how she "presents" her horse at his fences. Of course, when you know you have got his stride right, everything is easy—all you have to do is to kick him into the obstacle the last few strides, and as he takes off, you think what a fine rider you are! It is the hopeless feeling when you have got him all wrong at a fence—that is the difficult moment riding side-saddle—there is so little you can do to help your horse at anything high or that needs jumping very well and cleanly. What a difference it must make to even a good horse, to have a really good man on his back, who gives him a squeeze and practically makes him take-off at the exact right moment—compared to a *weak* woman side-saddle, who perhaps doesn't even try to help her horse—or if she does, only "jobs" him in the mouth at the wrong moment! These sort of people should ride brilliant horses, and leave it all to them. How perfectly a loose horse generally jumps, on his own. He practically never falls in a point-to-point or a hunt. This does not mean to imply that because a woman is weak on a horse, she cannot present her horse well at a fence. Many of them have lovely "hands," ride beautifully at any kind of fence and never touch their horses' mouths when they jump. Consequently, horses jump extraordinarily well with them, in spite of their handicap of riding side-saddle, and being physically weak on a horse.

When riding at a brook, or a fence with a very wide ditch on the landing side, you should go very fast at it, but it is not necessary to start going fast all across the field. If you do, your horse will only be blown when you get there! Have him "collected," then about twenty lengths from the fence let him "slide along" at it as fast as you like. It is wonderful the width a horse can jump with very little effort, and sometimes practically from a stand.

(NOTE.—A horse covers fifteen feet in his stride at a fair canter, and twelve feet is a sizeable brook!)

Open water is comparatively easy to ride at, provided you

are on a bold horse that likes jumping water, but there are very few that do ! A highish bit of timber with a brook the other side of it, is difficult to ride at—anyhow side-saddle—as it requires jumping cleanly, and clearing the height, as well as the width. The banks of a brook are very often unsound, but if you choose your place close to a willow tree (if there is one), you are sure to find the best "take-off."

Jumping into a tarmac-road is quite the worst, and most frightening thing, to negotiate safely nowadays, and one's advice is, "Don't," if you can possibly help it !—but if you must, be extra careful on landing, to leave your horse's head alone, at the same time trying to keep him straight and get him to go on across the road before turning right or left, as if he tries to turn as he lands on the tarmac he is sure to slip up. Another way is to make your horse jump sideways, so that he lands facing up the road and along the edge of it, thereby with luck avoiding the tarmac. Jumping out of a tarmac-road is sometimes nearly as bad, especially on a horse who is keen, as when he tries to "strike off" to go at the fence, his feet usually slip from under him. If it is just a gap to jump, keep your horse on the grass-edge, and make him jump from a stand. Of course, it is so much easier to carry all this out on a clever, good-mannered horse, than when you are on a difficult, impetuous one—or a horse that refuses and tries to "nap it" down the tarmac, which is the worst of all ! Also in some countries there is a wide strip of grass along the sides of all the roads, making it much easier and safer to jump into or out of them. But failing that, try, if you can, to find a gate ! For example, in the Beaufort country, jumping into a road generally means off the top of a bank right on to the tarmac.

You generally find most horses vary jumping different sorts of fences. Some love timber, others do not ; one is extra good at a ditch to him, and another very difficult to get right at it. So that again it rather depends on the horse how you ride at your fences—but it is a sound rule never to let your horse go at anything "uncollected" or unbalanced, however good he may be.

During a day's hunting the observant person sees many illustrations of orthodox, and unorthodox, methods of riding at a fence—and incidentally the latter are not perpetrated by the fair sex alone, by any means! There is a saying, "Throw your heart over, the horse will follow," and there is a good deal in that, for a strong, determined rider of either sex, who may be no "artist," certainly does get the other side, although the methods may be crude.

THE POSITION OF THE BODY

When riding side-saddle at an ordinary fence, lean slightly forward as your horse takes off, and slightly back as he lands.



An "up-jump"

Grip your pummels, and try to keep your left leg into your horse's side and not let it go back. "Drop your hands"; never let your horse, what is called, jump "into his bridle" unless he has a very "wooden" mouth, and doesn't mind

being held on to, he will, after a bit, take to jumping "short" (not "spreading" himself), and then more than likely begin refusing. If you ride a strange horse, and you find him landing over his fences with his head in the air and ears back, in spite of you trying to "throw him the reins," you can be quite sure he has been ridden by someone who has "hung on" to him jumping, and jobbed him in the mouth on landing. Riding side-saddle when jumping an "up-jump"—i.e. landing higher than where you take-off, like a bank—or any fence that a horse has to make an extra effort at—lean well forward, and remain so when he lands, and put your hands right forward.

Some horses are much harder to sit on jumping than others. Some seem to "leave you behind" as they jump and make you feel a far worse rider than you ever thought you were! Others are most unseating at anything they have to make an effort over. Whatever you do, when you are jumping, riding either side-saddle or astride, never, what is called, "hail a cab!" i.e. throwing one arm in the air. It is a trick some people get into—and nothing looks worse; you must have both hands on the reins (see page 60).

JUMPING ASTRIDE

These days we hear a lot about the "forward" and the "backward" seat, but has the theory of good and bad shoulders ever been suggested as the answer to the argument? It is quite certain you can take a liberty on good-shouldered horses, and sit far more forward on them, jumping, than you can on bad shoulders. For the reason, if a horse with bad shoulders pecks, and you have adopted the forward seat, your chances of recovery are at a discount, for he is physically incapable of getting his fore-legs forward in time to save himself, increasingly handicapped, as the bad shoulders will be by your extra weight—whereas had you thrown your weight back, the horse would have stood a much better chance. As stated, this does not apply so much to a horse with really good

shoulders, as they will enable him to recover when the other *must* fall.

Let us try, then, to strike the happy medium. Nothing looks worse, and is worse, than a rider gradually retiring on to his horse's tail as he approaches the fence! If you throw yourself too far back on landing the tendency is to "job" your horse's mouth through not giving him enough rein. In jumping riding astride, when you want your horse to take-off, always incline the body forward. It will take the weight off his quarters and hind-part and enable him to use his propelling power to the best advantage. At the same time, take a good grip of him with your knees downwards, for two reasons:

(1) To retain your seat;

(2) To convey to your horse that you mean to get to the other side. If you can give him a touch with both heels when you want him to take off, so much the better (but unless you know the exact time to do this, it is better left alone). At the same time, "drop your hands" (i.e. giving him some slack in his rein) to enable him to stretch out his neck, and get well up and over the obstacle. When you feel your horse in mid-air and he is about to land, keep your body in the centre of gravity, and gradually distribute your weight to the rear, as his fore-hand meets the ground.

REFUSING

Very few women are capable of hitting a horse properly, to cure him of refusing, or getting sticky, at his fences. It is a great art if done correctly, so if you find you can't do it with effect yourself give someone half a day's hunting on your horse who can, to put him straight. There will be a great difference next time you ride him.

You will find that 90 per cent of horses that refuse, come round to the near side, and it is obvious that for chastisement you must be ready to hit him on his near side, or on his near shoulder. (You frequently, if not generally, see the rider at his second attempt—and often as not, at his third and fourth—

at the fence preparing to hit his horse somewhere on the off-side. This, because he usually carries his whip in his right hand—and it has not dawned on him, or her, that the thing to do is to change it into the left. The result is, he or she, is only accelerating the fault, and round the horse comes again.) If you find your horse refusing like this to the near side, put your whip in your left hand and let your horse see it out of the corner of his eye. Kick him hard with your heels when you think he should take off, and as you feel him "scotching,"



Refusing to your left put your whip in your left hand.

meet him half-way with two quick ones down his shoulder, and await results. He will either change his mind and take-off, or more probably just pull up altogether. If the latter, take him back half a dozen lengths, turn him sharp round, squeeze him well with your legs, and let him see your whip out of the corner of his eye, on the near side. Unless he is a very persistent and bad refuser, this should have the desired effect! If not, you must set about him properly and the horse given to understand that he cannot do this sort of thing with impunity. If you are bent on curing him you should stay there till he does jump, irrespective of whether you miss a hunt or not. But see

that your "punishment fits the crime" and no more, for remember that horses refuse from different causes. It is inhuman and waste of time to punish a horse who is suffering from troubles, such as splints, corns, jarred shins (shin sore), or shoulders—or a horse who has hitherto been honest and is now developing a "leg"—or one affected with a bad sore back.

PUNISHMENT

A word about punishment. In theory, of course, a horse should be punished *directly* he misbehaves—refuses, shies, bucks, kicks, or does not do what his rider means him to do : in practice the only ways to punish a horse in the hunting-field are by kicking him hard, jobbing him in the mouth, or hitting him at the hands of the good horsewoman, both astride and side-saddle. For the average woman out hunting the first is likely to be most effective, the second may spoil mouth and temper, and the third looks undignified if it is severe enough to be effectual, and merely silly if it is not. There is something particularly repulsive in a woman knocking a horse about in most cases. If a horse is bad enough to require a good hiding, a woman is much wiser to hand the refractory animal over to a good fair-minded horseman, or get rid of him altogether. No woman should punish her horse (1) if she is in a temper, (2) unless she is quite conscientiously aware that the blame in no way attaches to herself. Did she throw her own heart over the fence? Was she hesitating? Did she give him every chance?

As already stated, a good horsewoman is one who covers the defects of physique by the Art of Riding and the Grace of Horsemanship. It is necessary to cultivate the Grace that conceals Art. No one ought to "set about a horse" unless he or she is determined to see the matter through and to *win*. Half-way measures or surrender are worse than leaving things alone till another day. Sometimes there is a reason for a horse's misbehaviour. (See page 49.) More often it is the rider to blame, but if not, the good horsewoman can often just "give him one" that will put him right. Thus a horse not

jumping big enough given "one" as he takes off or is in the air will make him spread himself and at the next fence he will probably jump big enough for anything. One cut administered at the exact right moment will probably be sufficient to prevent a horse refusing. Most "steady refusers" have a habit of turning always to one particular side; if you are ready you can give him one on that side, and in pained surprise at the shock he will probably make some attempt at jumping.

No woman should be allowed to ride or hunt a consistent rearer. The risks are too great. A young horse inclined to rear can often be cured by pulling him over and quickly sitting on his head and staying there for five minutes. If this does not cure him he should be parted with, and needless to say, that the experiment must be handed over to an extremely competent rough rider suitably remunerated for the job!

ON FALLS

Everyone who rides to Hounds must expect a few falls, but it should be the aim of a good horsewoman to avoid unnecessary falls for obvious reasons. If the novice, or anyone else, is afraid of falls, the comforting thing to remember is that the fright *of* falling is ten times worse than the fright *in* falling! As a rule the latter happens so quickly and so unexpectedly that there is no time to feel fright, and one picks oneself up with surprise giving away to annoyance. If neither the rider nor her horse is hurt after a nasty fall she should remount her horse at once, even if later she may decide to go home. The nervous system has sometimes a curious complex reaction, and after a shock, entailing mental or physical strain of any kind, it is better to meet the reaction before it has time to set in permanently and tend to spoil the rider's nerve.¹

The majority of hunting falls do not hurt at all. All the same, they should not be courted unnecessarily. All sorts of

¹ Among airmen this tendency is well known, and after a flying crash or bad strain to the nerves it is often customary to order out all machines and take the air.

larking over fences, other than serious schooling, should be avoided. "Larking" nearly always leads to trouble of some sort or other. The worst falls are on the flat or over wire. Nothing is more upsetting to nerve than slipping about over tarmac roads or to be warned of "wire about here" just as hounds settle down to run. Not only a nasty fall, quite unnecessary, and an unfair hunting risk is involved in both cases, but it is odds on being hurt badly oneself and seriously maiming, if not destroying, a good hunter.

Until County Councils are obliged to use a non-slippery top-dressing on their roads (particularly their by-roads), and to leave grass verges on which horses can be ridden wherever possible, and where impracticable to sprinkle gravel regularly (especially in *dry* weather, when tarmac is more slippery for horses than it is when wet)—we must do what we can to obviate the risks. One dealer, living on a slippery road, goes to the trouble of putting every new horse that comes into his yard down on the slippery roads, as he finds that a horse which has once been down on a road seldom falls again. He rugs up the new purchase as carefully as possible, then with thick bandages on all four legs, and knee-caps, has him run down the road in hand at a sharp pace and suddenly stopped and turned round. The horse invariably slips up and comes down the first time, but he hardly ever can be got down a second or third time. A week later he is tried again, and he may skate about but has learnt to save himself.

Much can be done by special shoeing to save slipping. Three-quarter shoes are much used by the London police so that the horse can get a grip with his heel and frog, as Nature intended him to do, but some hunting countries are said to be too stony to permit of hunting in this way. A solution may be found in accustoming hunters to some sort of three-quarters shoe, as in time a horse's hoof can be got hard enough to withstand almost anything short of spiky rocks. The Greeks did not shoe their horses, nor did the Saracens; neither did Cortez and the Conquistadors in Central America, or the Yeomanry in Sinai during the War, or the old stock-riders in Australia, or

the American Indians. The trouble is that in Great Britain we have to accustom our horses to go equally well on both hard and soft going so as to gallop down a road or to circumnavigate a bog. It is easy enough to get horses' legs sound and hard by constant slow trotting along roads, but it is equally necessary for hunting in heavy countries that they should be able to go through the deep, involving an entirely different set of muscles. A clever stud-groom has to aim at attaining a degree of both types of fitness. There are many patent non-slip devices on the market which may be experimented with, provided they are of a type which in no way covers up the frog, as covering the frog quickly leads to trouble with the feet.

A certain good horse-master once pointed out that in galloping down the side of a road with hounds one should never go half on the road, half on the grass sort of thing, but always either on the grass, if possible, or else on the road entirely, as not only is there more risk of the horse stumbling, but there are certain little muscular cushions in a horse's legs which automatically absorb the concussion on hard going, and in the half-and-half way the reactions are not quick enough to cater for the odd leg which may hit the road, and it is then the horse is lamed.

Some horses begin to stumble badly; their feet should be looked at. It may be due to bad shoeing, wrong conformation or the beginning of serious trouble. If there is heat present the horse should be seen by a good vet.

A novice should take care to avoid slipping up on the road by never jerking at her horse's mouth. Nor is it wise to stop, or start suddenly, or turn sharply. A collected trot with a free rein is often the best pace to go down a slippery road, avoiding the steep camber at the sides.

While trotting along roadsides and in lanes, farmyards, etc., be ever on the look out for broken glass, bits of rusty cans, etc. One knows of good horses incurably lamed from such things as stepping on the point of a long nail sticking up out of a bit of old gate lying on the ground which his rider failed

to notice. In farmyards look out for clothes-lines, loose wire, gutters, and even open drains or wells. The Secretary of a well-known Hunt once disappeared down a well in the middle of a good hunt ! His horse stepped on the rotten planks over the well—but luckily it was not deep ! In some countries narrow drains across the middles of grass pastures are a nasty trap for the unwary.

Rabbit-holes must always be looked out for and when seen shout “Ware hole !” and point your whip at the place to warn the riders behind you.

Always make certain that your horse’s shoes are not worn sharp on the *inside* edge of the shoe, as this is what causes bad “over-reaches.” In heavy going the fore-feet are apt to stick a second too long in landing over a jump and are not out of the way before the hind-feet strike them ; it is a proved fact that sharp *inner* edges make the blow much more serious, and may even cut a tendon.

When a fall does come your way, it can often be mitigated. A fall side-saddle may be very serious if the horse rolls over you—on the other hand, the firm grip of the side-saddle makes for much fewer falls than the average woman astride, and one can often keep a horse on his legs side-saddle when one would have been a “gonner” astride. Riding all sorts of horses in all sorts of countries one is bound to take tosses, but by rolling here or putting an arm out there one can most times avoid any serious damage. Of course accidents are bound to happen, as they do even if one crosses a street ! It is well for the novice to have a few falls either in riding-school or on soft ground—it instils confidence to show that they do not hurt. For instance, this sort of report from a fair horsewoman may be reassuring. “In the course of twelve seasons hunting pretty hard, I have only hurt myself once, though I have had a few of all sorts of cushy falls, including ‘voluntaries,’ being shied off, bucked off, kicked off, when a balance-strap slipped back, and jumped off both astride and side-saddle—it is only hurting to one’s dignity and saves one becoming pompous ! I have come down in ditches to me, and away from me, fallen

in a brook with my horse upside down on top of me, had a horse come back over with me both on the flat and in a bog, once come down in a rabbit-hole, I have been swept off under a tree, which was very annoying, twice jumped into barbed wire, which was horrible, and have twice had falls getting young horses caught up trying to ride them quietly over rabbit wire-netting lying on the ground—each time the horse getting the netting fixed under a hind-shoe and, of course, starting to kick and plunge as horses do when anything surprising ties them up—putting my coat over his head prevented one kicking till someone came up and was able to help me free him—the other occasion we were both mixed up on the ground till I got free first and sat on his head ! ”

One has a much better chance to deal with a horse mad with fright if one can blindfold him, and a horse cannot struggle so badly if you sit firmly on his head.

A certain bad fall, with the rider pinned under a wildly kicking horse, was saved from being a hundred times worse by someone else's promptitude, quickly jumping off, seizing his own saddle and popping it over the prostrate rider's head to ward off the wild, death-dealing kicks. Prompt action of this kind saves one enormously in a tight place. Quickness of thought and deed may mean life or death with horses, and it is well to cultivate this most valuable attribute if you possibly can out hunting.

Should you come down with your horse, roll away from him as fast as you can, even if there is only a remote chance of him rolling your way. You may not be able to hear him or see him. One should try and keep hold of the reins if possible, but for a woman this is often attendant with extra danger, and few men will mind catching a woman's horse for her—provided always she does not fall too often, and provided she can remount quickly !

Should one be literally "thrown from one's mount," the best thing is to tuck in one's head between hunched shoulders, and let one's self go limp ! There is much less likelihood of breaking anything if one hits the ground in a limp bundle

instead of with every muscle braced, clawing ineffectively at empty air. But it is easier said than done. If thrown violently to one side, an arm put out will break the violence of the fall—better a broken arm or collar-bone than your neck.

The worst falls always seem to occur in the silliest sort of ways.

Lastly, one might point out that the qualities required in a horsewoman are much those natural to the sex—sympathy with your horse; keenness to persevere; quickness of mind, to look ahead, to anticipate, to be ready; a stoutish heart, gentle hands, a firm seat and good fellowship—to which might be added good health. No woman who is not feeling her best can be expected, or expect herself, to ride well to hounds *consistently*, and she may do untold harm to her own health as well as other people's happiness. Health is a great gift without which it is difficult to enjoy hunting to the full, and only those that have lost it realize what it means. One cannot avoid disasters of Fate, but one should do all in one's power to retain one's good health, on which nerve for most women undoubtedly depends.

Most women who ride well and go hard are of relatively light physique. Of course, there are exceptions. One sees them in every hunting country, generally great hefty creatures, referred to with grudging admiration as "Hard as Nails" (with a face to boot!). Such a one is probably indifferently mounted and turned out, rides side-saddle or astride, is apt to look a sight under other than hunting conditions, goes as well to hounds as any man, apparently careless as to whether she kills herself, her horse, or anyone else. She has generally a cheery, weather-beaten face which on no stretch of the imagination can be otherwise good-looking. She may be any age between fifteen and fifty, is capable of summoning a flow of language that would impress an Australian team driver should you chance to get in her way, yet is always ready to do a kind action for hunting's sake. She probably knows as much about horses' ailments as the local vet, as well as the market value of every horse within twenty miles, is a "holy

terror" to the stable helper, and has a jumping sense of every fence in the country-side. She has the strength of ten, a heart of unbreakable flint, a back of steel, and every horse knows he must go on, over, or through—but ON "like a train she goes" people say—into the same field as hounds. But there is another lady there with hounds, quiet, balanced, riding with her head and her hands, her eyes on the leading hounds ready to anticipate the suddenest turn and pick out the best place. "She goes like a bird—the best lady in our Hunt." And how does a bird go? Why, without apparent effort, or thrust, silently, serenely, neatly, perfectly, gaily, and graciously—a thing of beauty and joy, without troubling its fellows, without knocking things down and without rooting things up. This should be the type for every woman out hunting to aim at, leaving the barging, noisy, loud, crashing train-like type to a small class of genuine and necessitous horse copers.

The majority of the good horsewomen of our day prove conclusively that the best feminine charm is not lost but rather enhanced by the subtle distinction of riding a well-bred, well-made hunter well. We all know them sometimes quite ordinary looking on their feet but on a horse supreme, veritable goddesses—Dianas of the Chase—and one is inclined to think that the rising Dianas, thanks to better riding-lessons and good ponies, will be even more attractive to look at than the past and present generations.

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CHAPTER VIII

CUSTOMS OF THE HUNTING-FIELD

“There must be unanimity and concord or we shan’t kill no foxes.”
(MR. JORROCKS.)

I. GOLDEN RULES.

- (1) **D**ON’T be late for a Meet. If you have to “ride on,” give yourself plenty of time. If your groom takes your horse on, see that he starts early enough, and never let your horse be taken on to a Meet too fast, as so many grooms do, having started late and trying to make up for lost time, so as to get there punctually.



See the balance strap is through the martingale.

- (2) Before you get on your horse see that your saddle and bridle are put on all right ! If you ride side-saddle be sure that your girths are tight enough, and that your balance-strap is

through your martingale. See that the balance-strap, martingale, and curb-chain are neither too tight nor too loose, and that the throat-lash is not too tight.

(3) If it is a cold day don't let your horse stand and get cold. Give him a chance to "stale" through.

(4) All this time keep near the hounds, and be ready to move off with them. Always keep as near behind them as you can, either going to the first draw, or from one covert to another during any time in the day. You never know when an outlier might jump up, or hounds suddenly gallop to a halloo. Also, sometimes a covert has a lane leading up to it, or there are several narrow gateways to go through before you get there—so if you are right behind in the crowd, you will be in a bad position if anything happens, and nothing is more annoying than to see hounds streaming away, and yourself left behind wedged in amongst the crowd.

(5) Get as good a position as possible at the first covert; listen all you can and don't talk. Notice which way the wind is—watch the Whipper-in if you can see him, or whoever is sent on to listen.

(6) Be ready to "jump off" and gallop when hounds go away—but wait till the Field Master gives you the word to go. Don't dash off on your own initiative, even if you hear a fox being hallooed away—for all you know hounds may not yet have gone, or they might be running another fox in covert.

(7) When you do get away, gallop "all out" to get a start, and try your best to keep your position. If some people go one way and some another, don't hesitate yourself which way you'll go—make up your mind quickly. If there's a scent and hounds have got a start, and really look as if they're going to run fast, jump a fence, instead of stopping to open a gate—you'll find you'll gain valuable time. You'll also find if hounds are running fast and keep on going, even for ten minutes, however big a "Field" there is, they'll soon get "sorted out," and you won't have much trouble to keep your place then—if you've once got a good start.

(8) If you can plainly see scent is bad, hounds keep checking,



Photo Sport, General

GIVING THE HORSE FLIGHT—INTRIDE

The Hon Mrs Arthur Baillie, a very good rider astride sex; Latetashore, and the fortunate horse of a horse, in 1907.
Here, seen jumping at the Grafton Hunt, 1907.



GIVING THE HORSE EVERY CHANCE—SIDE-SADDLE

Mrs Marshall jumping the "triple bar" at a Horse Show in 1930. She is one of the best horsewomen in Ireland, that is almost to say in the world, and equally good across country, point-to-point riding, show-jumping, and show-jumping.

and can't run on, keep right away from them—go a field wide on the right or left, and don't go with the crowd, who will be pressing on hounds (and most of them delighted to get a chance to be so near them for once!).

(9) Don't jump a fence then, unless you have to. When hounds are running slowly and there is no scent, you will rarely see a man or woman who really goes well jumping fences if they can help it, or, anyhow, never unnecessary ones. The sort of people who do are generally not to be seen when hounds run fast.

(10) If the going is deep, save your horse all you can. Try and avoid boggy patches of ground and never gallop through a deep muddy gateway. Pick out what looks the best going and keep on it as much as possible—perhaps under a hedge or along the top of the furrows. When you are on deep plough you will find a wet furrow the soundest going. If your horse is blown, and you get the chance, take him on a road for a bit. Horses love getting on a road, off deep going, and it is wonderful how quickly they recover and get their wind again.

(11) Watch hounds all the time in a hunt and if you are on the right or left of them and they suddenly swing towards you, slow up, and mind you don't get over the line. Be sure not to press on them when they check—you can generally tell when they're going to do so if you keep your eye on the *leading* hounds—and the moment they throw up their heads, stop at once, before the Field Master has to tell you to "Hold Hard," and in spite of everyone else surging on. When the Field Master shouts out "Stand still" be sure and do so, and don't move on till he does, when hounds have again hit off the line. At a check don't keep "edging" on after hounds who are trying to cast themselves, and the huntsman who is doing his best to help them. The steam from your horse certainly won't help them, and you will only spoil your own sport.

(12) Don't watch other people and do what they do, or follow others like sheep (without thinking what you are doing or where hounds are), with the exception of someone who goes

really well and knows the country from A to Z, and who you know is generally right and always sees a hunt. Keep an eye on him if you like in a hunt, and if you see him turn away from hounds, or some fence, you can be sure there is some very good reason. But generally try and think for yourself, see if you can use your own brains in a hunt. Try and go the shortest way to hounds on your own and never get into the habit of following one person.

(13) If you come to a fence you can jump anywhere, choose your own place and jump it. Don't always wait for someone else to go first (unless your horse is refusing).

(14) Try and cut off corners, and keep down-wind of hounds when they're running; the probability is they will then turn towards you. When hounds are racing, and you can't afford to make one mistake or to go a yard out of your way, that is the most difficult hunt to see really well, and is the test of a good man or woman to Hounds. In a very fast hunt you will have to think quickly. Get yourself into the habit every field you jump into, to look at once for the best place to jump out of it again. You will find it much more difficult to do this in some countries than in others.

(15) Choose what you think is the best place to jump in a fence (i.e. with a good take-off) and keep straight at it. Don't change your mind at the last moment and try and jump another place to the right or left and come in at an angle—you will more than likely be "cutting in" in front of someone else if you do. If you have to change your mind for some unforeseen reason, such as rabbit-holes, wire, etc., always look behind, and see if you are taking anyone else's place before you go on at it.

(16) Never gallop across anybody else's front, even in the middle of a field—and never cut off the tail-hounds when they are trying their best to get up to the "body" of the pack. A good eye for a country may be a natural "gift," but it can also be acquired to a certain extent. Another test of a really first-rate woman to hounds is one that can go brilliantly on her own in a fast hunt in a country she does not know, and on a strange

horse. Many a woman can go well on a good horse and in a country both of which she knows very well, but the greatest test of all is the woman who can go well and "get there" in a Hunt on a difficult or bad slow horse, or a young "green" one. It is comparatively easy to go well on a brilliant hunter.

(17) Take your turn at a gap or when waiting to jump any fence. Don't come up from behind and "cut in" just as another is starting to ride at it. When you jump a fence behind anyone else give the person plenty of room, in case they fall; don't let your horse get going at it until you see them land all right—especially if it is a nasty-looking place, or your horse takes a good hold once you have presented him at a fence. If your horse refuses you should let the person coming behind you jump first, before you have another go.

(18) Always be ready to make way for the hunt-servants, the Master, or tail-hounds, coming behind you through a gateway; and always pull back and let the former take your place at a fence, even in a fast hunt, and do all you can to help them at any time.

(19) Be sure and catch a gate as you go through it, and don't let it slam on others. Have great respect for the Master, especially if he is getting on in years, and don't bump into him, or push in front of him, going through a gateway. Never disobey him (whatever age he is!) or take no notice when he tells you to "hold hard," "stand still," not to go across a certain field, nor jump some fence. He is sure to have a very good reason for stopping you, and the average person out hunting little knows of all the letters of complaint the Master gets, and very often, during a season.¹

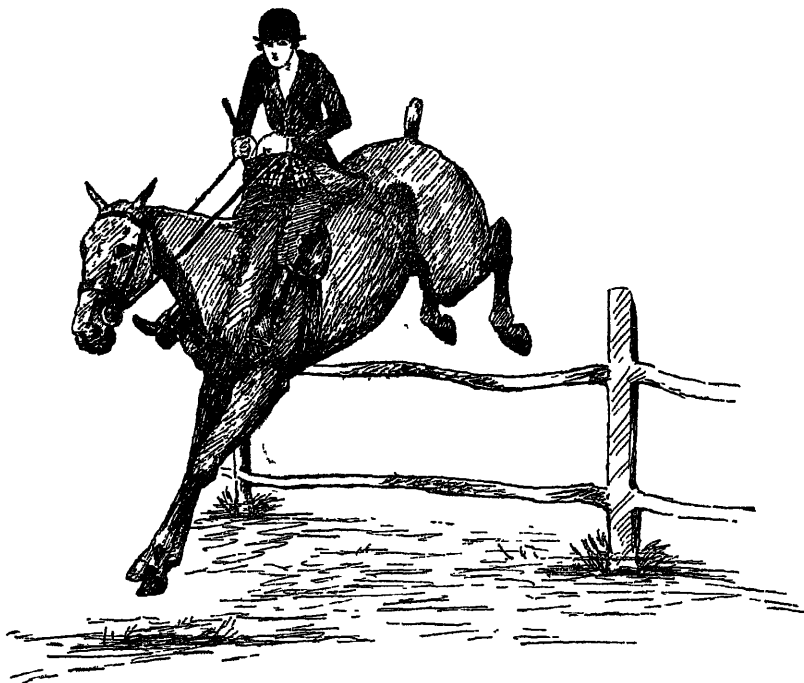
(20) You may find, through perhaps no fault of your own, that you have got "left" when hounds have gone away from

¹ If by chance you have got behind, and the whole "Field" have got in front of you at a gateway, and hounds are running, don't just come in at the tail-end of the crowd and wait till you can get through—gallop round them to the right or left of the gate, and you'll probably get a chance to slip through—especially if you see a hunt-servant, or the Master, in a hurry; people will make way for them, and you may be able to pop through behind them! The great thing out hunting is to be quick and attend—don't go to sleep, or talk too much.

a covert. Nothing can be more annoying if you miss a good hunt, but it is no good galloping madly after hounds on these occasions and vainly trying to catch them, unless you can see them turning towards you and you think you have a very good chance of getting to them. It is far better to save your horse for another hunt and trot along quietly after them, trying to cut off corners, and hoping they will check, or run to ground. You see people tearing off as hard as they can go with no earthly chance of ever catching hounds, jumping everything they see and doing a lot of unnecessary damage. They probably have no idea where hounds are and are only following others "in the same boat" as themselves, who are perhaps going by the tracks and gaps made by the lucky few who are with hounds.

(21) Never risk doing unnecessary damage at any time. Never ride over beans or roots under any circumstances, nor over seeds or wheat, unless the ground is very hard and dusty—or the farmer is a friend of yours and encourages you to do so! Always keep in as close under the hedge as possible if you go round the edge of an arable field. If you are on a super-jumper, don't be tempted to jump a bit of timber, or a gate, just for the fun of it, when hounds aren't running, or, at any rate, only slowly. You know your horse wouldn't touch it, but there are always people out hunting who will jump anything just because someone else does (they wouldn't dream of doing it on their own!), and as they're probably on very moderate horses who hit everything, they would smash the gate, and the owner would have all the expense of putting up a new one—not to mention his cattle or sheep getting out. Never jump hurdles unnecessarily—they break so easily, and horses are very inclined to hit them—therefore on no account jump into a sheepfold. Of course, when hounds are running like mad and you can't afford to lose a moment, jump anything you like (there probably won't be many there to follow you then!), and if you think a gate looks as if it won't open easily, jump it (if you're feeling brave enough!) or the fence, if there is one, alongside it.

(22) If your horse is inclined to kick in a gateway, keep "feeling" his mouth and put your hand behind your back, or have a red ribbon in his tail. If he kicks really badly, you shouldn't come and stand in a crowded gateway at all but keep him out of harm's way. Always be on the look out for hounds either stopping in front of you on the way to draw, or coming up from behind—and if you are galloping down a "ride" in a



The wrong way.

covert when hounds go away, be careful of tail-hounds suddenly coming across you.

(23) When hounds have killed, or run to ground, keep your horse right away from them—and mind not to get in the way if a fox is going to be bolted.¹

(24) Never stand too near another horse, unless you know it won't kick, and don't let your own horse bite another's tail, or rub his head against its back or quarters (most horses will

¹ Never take your horse into a covert cub-hunting, keep him outside.

kick then!). Also mind he doesn't rub his head against somebody's knee, as it can be most painful. Be careful trotting down a road not to get too close to the person in front of you, and treading on his horse's heels. Never gallop too fast into a gateway, unless your horse is under complete control, otherwise you will find yourself bumping into another horse's quarters or treading on his heels also. When horses are all mad-fresh at the beginning of the season, and bucking and kicking across the first field after moving off from the Meet, don't gallop past anyone else close enough to them to get kicked.

(25) Help others as much as possible out hunting—especially children on small ponies. Let them go in front of you over a gap, or make room to let them through a crowded gateway, and open or hold a gate for them. In fact, encourage them all you can. If there is no great hurry, and you are waiting your turn to jump anything, always let anyone on a young horse, or an impetuous hot horse, that doesn't like being kept waiting, go in front of you, even if it is your turn. Catching a loose horse and taking it back to its owner is a great test of unselfishness in a good hunt, when it means you losing your place if you do. But there is no need for a woman to anyhow take a man's horse back—some man should always offer to do it—unless, unluckily for her, she happens to be the only person who tries to catch it and nobody goes to her assistance. If this should happen to you and you see the rider running, and apparently none the worse, put the reins over a gate-post and leave the horse there, and go on. Always tell anyone if you see their horse has lost a shoe, or got a cut or an over-reach—or is going lame—and they have not noticed it.

(26) Don't keep your horse out for too long—anyhow not till after Christmas (and not even then if he's young). Of course if you have two horses out a day you're all right—otherwise it is far better for him to give a horse two short days a week than one long one. So if you have a really good hunt in the morning, or a lot of galloping about in deep going, take him home. It is very hard to have to do so sometimes when

you know hounds are going to draw a good covert, and you think you will miss a hunt in the afternoon. But a high-couraged horse will seldom show that he's tired as long as he's with hounds—and personally one can never really enjoy another hunt if there's the feeling all the time that the horse has done enough, and one ought to stop and go home.

(27) If you are having a bad morning—very little scent, or a ringing fox in a bad bit of country—if you have only one horse out, save him then for a hunt in the afternoon in good country with the hope of scent improving, as it often does towards the end of the day. In the morning try and “go cunning,” trot about and see all you can, without taking anything out of your horse. Of course you may miss a hunt doing this—hounds *might* suddenly begin to run well—but sometimes it is well worth chancing it.

(28) Don't go home too fast. Never “lark” over fences, and be careful to shut all gates behind you, and always walk the last mile (unless it is bitterly cold and pouring with rain), otherwise your horse will “break out” after he's been in the stable for a bit—and that gives your groom a lot of extra trouble. Never stop at a house on your way home, and get someone to hold your horse outside, or put him in the stable while you wait for your car to take you home, or to have a drink. Unless a horse is terribly beat after a very hard day and you want to give him some gruel, take him straight home. If you want your car, get someone to telephone for it for you, or do so quickly yourself, and ride on to meet it. Nothing is so bad for a horse as to keep him hanging about after a day's hunting. Always get him home to his own stable as soon as possible.

II. DAMAGE

The account of one day's hunting in Chapter VII and the above “Golden Rules” will make it fairly evident that the woman who aspires to a good name in the modern hunting-field must be understanding of other things besides mere

riding. The most important of these perhaps is comprehension of what constitutes *Unnecessary Damage* to Property. Of course a certain amount of damage is sure to be done by a large Field going across country—fences broken, timber smashed, gaps made, beasts let out of fields, gates left open—but what farmers and landowners mostly object to is the unnecessary damage which is so often done by thoughtless members of the Field, sometimes even when hounds are not running. People going home have been known to leave a gate unlatched so that valuable stock got out into a lane and ate poisonous yew and died—result, £76 compensation for the act of an unknown visitor. Landowners, and farmers farming their own land, are generally wonderfully forgiving when damage is done whilst *bounds are running*, but with few exceptions they do not like to see people larking about when there is time to go through gates. In these hard times hunting residents and visitors should remember that they get their fun solely through the goodwill of the landowners and farmers of the district and they must do all in their power to continue friendly relations at all times. Nowadays many farmers and smallholders, nearly broke in the effort of making both ends meet, paying guaranteed wages without a guaranteed market, even with the best will in the world find it impossible to spare the men's time and the materials to repair gaps, or to provide a lad to prevent stock straying the day hounds are in the district. In spite of what certain individuals and sections of the Press and the public may claim to the contrary, there is no doubt at all that fox-hunting is a most popular sport with all classes in the country-side, but when times are bad it behoves all people with the true objects of hunting at heart to do all they can to prevent unnecessary damage being done to the land over which we ride with so little opposition.

Very often growing crops are ridden over entirely by ignorance. This ignorance is understandable, but not excusable in good hunting people. An elementary knowledge of farming and farmers' crops is essential.

Then there are local conditions and local customs to be

considered. In some Hunts people regularly ride over wheat, in others they go across seeds. Some days the novice notices that the Field Master stops people, other times he does not ; it is all very puzzling.

It is difficult to generalize and make rules—the amount of damage done to crops in the winter varies largely with the age of the crop, the condition of the ground, and the season, but it is a good rule *never to ride across any growing crops* unless hounds are running fast.

If you are obliged to do so, do as little damage as you possibly can, by not galloping, keeping to the headland (i.e. the outside edge of the field), going down the furrow of a wheat-field single file, and riding carefully between the rows of roots, mangels, etc.

Beans must never be ridden over under any circumstances, as the young bean shoot, once cut off or damaged, never grows again.

The worst possible time to ride over *wheat* and *seeds* is during wet weather when the going is heavy. At other times the damage done to wheat is problematical. On light soil, theoretically, no harm whatever may be done, but at times it is difficult to convince a farmer when his nice fifteen-acre field of wheat is cut up with deep hoof-marks ! On the other hand, a certain Point-to-Point course once had to include a large field of growing wheat. The field looked dreadful after about a hundred and twenty riders had galloped across it, and the Hunt paid a handsome rent and compensation for the damage ; nevertheless at harvest-time there was an excellent crop, rather heavier in the part cut up by the Point-to-Point than in the remainder of the field ! In fact, you cannot really estimate the amount of harm done to wheat till harvest-time, but it saves a lot of trouble to the Secretary, and possible unpleasantness with farmers, by *avoiding wheat altogether unless the soil is inordinately dry* by reason of light land or a dry season.

Recently sown crops should be avoided at all times. If you have ever planted even a simple seed like mignonette in your own garden you will know that the plot must be raked flat

and left! Horses' hooves make holes in the soft soil, and if it rains before they disappear the water collects in these holes and rots the seed before it has time to germinate.

After beans and wheat, the crop that can be most damaged by being ridden over is *seeds*. By "seeds" we mean rye grass, sainfoin, clover, lucerne, and the other animal food grasses akin to those, which in many upland countries of England are the farmers' most valuable crop. People hunting in countries where seeds are a staple crop soon get to know them and to recognize first, second, and third "ley" at once, but those used to grass pastures, heavy loam, woods, or hill country are apt to be mystified by being told to "Come off those seeds!" They can see nothing but stubble waiting, they suppose, to be ploughed in, and no one can hurt riding over stubble or fallow ground! If, however, you look closely you will notice tiny green plants between the rows of stubble, and when very small you might be forgiven for not recognizing sainfoin or clover if you have never seen the crop young before. "Seeds" are sown with, but come up much later than, the crop of wheat, barley, or oats—whatever the stubble may have been. The worst time to ride over seeds is during the first "ley," or first year. Seeds last two, three, or even five and six seasons. They do not always get a good hold the first year and if cut up by horses do not grow again. You can tell a first ley by noting the stubble along with the seeds, later on the stubble dies down and the crop of seed, clover, sainfoin, or lucerne gets heavier and stronger, and is not so easily knocked about. Little harm is done by riding over seeds in dry weather, but in wet weather, or when the land is riding heavy, the greatest care must be taken to avoid irreparable damage to the delicate crop of first ley seeds.

You should *avoid riding over roots* (mangels, turnips, swedes, etc.) all you can *before Christmas* as they will be dug out and stored as winter keep for cattle, and every one your horse chips in passing soon rots and becomes worthless. Roots after Christmas generally are those left to be fed off by sheep - and so will not be much spoilt—sheep are not particular!

Still, at no time do damage you can avoid. And be careful not to upset ewes in the lambing pen, or frighten young beasts in the yard.

In heavy grass-land you must take care not to ride over fields that have recently been harrowed in the spring. Grass begins to grow about the end of March when most farmers run the harrow over their meadows and sometimes roll them, and it is very annoying to see fields carelessly cut to pieces after they have been carefully prepared for a hay crop. Unless, soon after, more rain falls, young grass cut up by hoof-marks does not grow again, and the surface of the field becomes uneven for the cutting machine in June. Damage thus done to newly harrowed fields can generally be repaired by reharrowing. This the farmer sometimes does—if he is a friend to hunting, or knows that you will buy his hay—without claiming compensation from the Hunt or making a fuss, but in these days when labour is so expensive one can hardly expect him to provide a man and two horses, a full day's work, to repair the thoughtless actions of a few hunting people. Sometimes in a fast run, or with a big crowd, harrowed fields cannot be avoided.

Should it chance that you have it in your power to be in that neighbourhood the following day, you would be doing a good turn for fox-hunting, and your country in particular, if you called on that farmer and made enquiries in a friendly way. You will find him a very decent fellow, but probably rather harassed and possibly considering a heavy bill of damages to the Hunt. You may walk round with him and see the damage, which is probably more apparent than real, but in any event it is certainly annoying to him at a busy time of year. It is possible that you may see your way to helping, and offering, perhaps, yourself to pay for the necessary labour if the farmer provides the team and harrow. Probably an amicable arrangement will be made and you will ride away having made a new personal friend and gained a fresh supporter for the Hunt. Later, when the rather worried Secretary calls to enquire somewhat diffidently about the alleged damage on such and

such a date he will be agreeably surprised to be asked in for a drink by Farmer X and be told that "the young lady from ——— settled everything the very next day, and really there was nothing to it at all, and indeed the hay should be an extra fine crop after two goes with the harrow!"

In the same way the private present of a new gate to the struggling smallholder, whose apology therefore was smashed to atoms in your sight, may turn righteous wrath away from the Hunt and just save the situation and the proposed "warning off." A Hunt cannot always openly subsidize in this way, and official claims dealt with officially through secretaries and committees lose the human touch which is often so inexpensive, yet so valuable in a hunting country. A new gate will only cost you thirty-five shillings. It is the same with wire; and you, as a personal friend of a non-hunting farmer, may be able to get him to take his wire down as a favour to yourself. There are lots of little ways these things can be wangled even if everyone is broke! Two tickets for Wimbledon, a brace of pheasants, a bottle of port, a ticket in a sweep, a little bit of influence here and there, are a few suggestions as to how things can be done without calling on the Hunt for large sums of money.

How often does one hear, "D—— this wire, why can't it be got down? Whatever do they do with the Wire Fund?"

If every member of the Hunt undertook two or three farms in their area at a time and made themselves privately responsible, wire could be got down and put up at a minimum of trouble and expense. Hunting people must do it.

In the same way gaps can be made up quickly and cheaply, if only some member of the Hunt will see to it himself, or herself, and as quickly as possible.

The great thing is to avoid fresh wire being put up. It is much more difficult to get it down once a gap has been filled in with wire.

III. FIRST AID FOR THE HORSE

When one's horse is damaged one is generally lucky enough to fall in with someone much more knowledgeable than oneself, but if not, these are a few useful hints :

If your horse is badly cut with wire, overreach, stub, etc., dab on iodine as quickly as possible and before washing the place.

Never wash a fresh cut with *hot* water, as heat swells the outer skin tissues, preventing the disinfectant penetrating and thus making it more difficult to remove dirt from the bottom of the wound.

If iodine is not available, half a cupful of kitchen-salt in half a pail of chilled water that has been boiled, if possible, is a good substitute, and the place can be bandaged over a good dressing soaked in this saline solution. The dressing, of course, should be the cleanest material you can get—lint or gauze if possible, otherwise clean, soft linen, a folded handkerchief, piece of towel or even a cotton pillow-case borrowed from a cottage.

For a bad cut on a wall, if no iodine is available, you can dab the place with a clean rag dipped in a little petrol, which prevents the spread of the poison ever present in limestone walls. Petrol is said to absorb alkali which water, on the other hand, tends to spread.

Methylated spirit is, of course, an excellent antiseptic.

Veinous bleeding is recognized by the steady flow of darkish-coloured blood, while arterial bleeding comes in spurts (being the outgoing blood pumped direct from the heart). Of course, for serious bleeding a veterinary surgeon must be got at once. Meanwhile, one can endeavour to arrest the bleeding as much as possible by putting on a tourniquet. Tie a folded handkerchief or stock tie loosely with a reef knot above the wound, the side nearest to the heart, lay a short rod (a firm stick, or even a short hunting-crop may do at a pinch) on the knot, tie the ends again and use the stick or rod as a handle with which to tighten the pressure in order to stop the

loss of blood. A round stone wrapped in a glove or handkerchief and placed on a suitable point under the constricting tourniquet will also help. The "pressure points" on a horse, of course, have to be known to be really effective, but a tourniquet put on a leg even by an amateur, made thus with a pad pressing the vein or artery against the bone for a time, may save the life of a valued hunter before the vet arrives. The tourniquet must not be unduly tight nor on for long at a time. Directly the bleeding shows signs of stopping or being under control the tourniquet itself can be eased or removed and a pad of cotton-wool bandaged firmly on the place.

The amateur can do little to first-aid a horse that has been badly cut or staked in the body, though one has heard of a man who took his badly cut mare to the nearest farm and with an ordinary needle and oiled thread (first thoroughly boiled) put two stitches in her side himself, and saved her life.

Where a considerable surface is involved it is a good thing to have the horse injected with anti-tetanus serum, particularly is the horrible bug strong in certain localities where the land has been heavily manured, allotments, etc.

The good horsewoman should always be quick to notice when her horse is not up to the mark. Should he be sluggish, dull, or dispirited for no apparent reason, she should beware of hunting him or giving him a hard day. He may be suffering from indigestion, or from a chill on the kidneys.

Mares are particularly susceptible in the spring, and all hunters in tip-top condition are more susceptible to chills and colds than usual in March when they are changing their coats. Many falls have been occasioned through people neglecting to note that their horses are for some reason or another not up to the mark on that particular day. It is most important that grooms should be instructed to see that horses are induced to stale at the Meet—failures in this respect have cost the lives and health of many good hunters.

A pint of beer is an excellent pick-me-up for a tired horse, either on the way home or on arrival at his stables.

If a horse has been ridden all out and utterly exhausted,

and starts rolling and staggering in his gait, it is likely that his kidneys are affected, and if so, unless you do something about it quickly he will die. He should be got into some sort of stable. Then fill a sack half full of bran, pour a kettle of boiling water over the bran and put the sack nice and warm over the horse's back and loins with a rug or blanket over the top to keep the heat in. Give him some gruel if you can get it—otherwise some water with the chill off, in which you can put a handful of flour. Dry his ears well after he has staled and got thoroughly warm and dry, and later he may have recovered sufficiently to get him quietly home, but if it is far to go, or a very cold day, it would be kinder and wiser to leave him where he is, provided, of course, that there is someone to look after him properly. The best thing would be to motor-box him home, or to get his own groom out by car. Neglect to take these sort of precautions has lost many a good hunter unnecessarily.

A horse with pneumonia has been saved by sitting up all night and watching him till the crisis comes on. His temperature has to be taken constantly, and as in pneumonia with the human, it will be very high till at the crisis it falls suddenly and he breaks out into a cold sweat. You must then drench him with a bottle containing whisky, eggs, and milk, and dry him well, particularly his ears.

Many owners are not nearly careful enough about having a new purchase's heart properly tested. Of course vets, like doctors, are apt to be mistaken, but it is satisfactory to know at all events that your new horse is not suffering from any obvious disease of the heart. If a horse stops short in his gallop, begins to sway, or breaks out terrifically, get off him at once—there may be something seriously wrong. A broken blood-vessel may be nothing more than a slight bleeding of the nose, or it may be a serious internal hemorrhage.

If a horse has an open wound it is best to dock him of oats, beans, etc., till it has healed.

Perhaps as a last piece of advice, which will, we trust, be much more met with by the young horsewoman in everyday

hunting than the foregoing—teach yourself to listen to the beat of your horse's feet on the road so that you notice instinctively whether he has all his shoes on or not. It needs very little practice to count—one, two, three, four ; one, two, three, four—quite all right. . . . Then a good twenty minutes across country and a particularly boggy field, or two, back on the hard high road trotting again one, two, three, four . . . one, two, three, four—quite all right, but look ! someone in front there has lost a hind shoe, and the hoof is already beginning to break away ! We must tell the rider at once or the horse may be badly bruised and lamed. If we ourselves have a good blacksmith and a careful groom we ought to have no trouble in this direction in the ordinary course of events, but sooner or later we shall hear—one, two, *klop*, four . . . one, two, *klop*, four . . . one, two, *klop*, four . . . to our trained ear immediately noticeable, and as soon as possible dealt with so as to avoid any risk of lameness. A horse can be ridden on grass quite all right with a shoe gone, but he will quickly lame himself on a stony or rough road.

IV. FIRST AID FOR THE RIDER IN THE HUNTING FIELD

The leading people to Hounds in most hunting countries are the kindest and nicest. It is generally the first-flight men who pop off to open gates, and one of the best who stops a second to help the stranger who has cut his horse on wire.

It is not necessary for the novice to wait if a stranger has a fall. So long as other people are there, more knowledgeable than yourself, or at least one personal friend, it is better for you to go on after having pulled up to ask if there is anything you can do. Mostly there are people in the rear only too pleased to be able to do a kind action, and whom the loss of a good hunt does not seriously affect. But it may happen some time that your presence may mean life or death to a person who has had a serious fall, and you should then be as sure as possible that you do the right thing. Having been through a course of

First Aid is invaluable at such times—all hunting, flying, and sporting people should know First Aid.

An unconscious person should always be left as quiet as possible. Do not be frightened of loss of colour or heavy breathing at such a time. Undo the tie, take off your coat to keep the person warm, dispatch someone reliable for a doctor¹ to come to the spot if possible, and send a message to the nearest house warning that a bed may be required. Never give an unconscious person stimulant under any circumstances. Make the patient comfortable on the ground till the doctor comes and keep the injury at rest. Carrying on a gate is torture to someone with broken limbs, and a simple fracture has often been unnecessarily turned into a compound one by well-meant endeavours to move a person with a broken leg. Cut a boot if it is causing pain or the leg is swelling. If you are forced to move someone with a broken leg before a doctor can be got you must support the injury with something firm, such as a board, along the whole length of the limb, and tie both legs together with handkerchiefs, which will help to support the injured one.

If someone is rolled on and remains unconscious the odds are that the damage is serious ; on no account move him till a doctor comes. A person thrown on his head may get up in a few seconds seemingly all right but talking nonsense or with a muddled memory—a sure sign of concussion. He should be persuaded—it sometimes takes force—to go home in a car and to bed in a dark room with a milk diet for a day or two. Sickness is also a sign of concussion, even the slightest. The effects do not last long if properly cared for, but the young idiot who goes to a dance the night after being laid out for ten minutes is asking for trouble, and will get it in headaches, fainting-fits, and more falls for certain.

A broken arm or collar-bone is a simpler matter as the patient can probably tell you where it hurts. In a collar-bone fracture one shoulder droops down. You can roll up your gloves into a soft pad to put under the armpit on the injured

¹ A *written* message to the doctor is best, saying what has happened.

side, lay the forearm across the chest, hand upwards, and support it at the elbow by a sling, made by a big handkerchief or hunting-stock, then tying the elbow of the injured arm close to side with a second stock placed right round the body. A broken arm is eased by taking off the coat (sound arm first) and fixing a support to the part where the break appears to be. A hunting-whip, a bit of board or a stick out of the hedge, bound on firmly with handkerchiefs (but not so as to stop circulation), will act as a splint till the patient can be got in a car to the doctor, the arm being supported by a sling. Cuts should be dabbed with iodine. Someone so unlucky as to be kicked badly on the head should be laid flat down with a slight support to the head, and not moved until the doctor comes under any circumstances, even to getting mackintoshes and umbrellas to keep off the rain.

Pneumonia from cold and shock has often more serious effects than the injury—borrow a hot-water bottle for the feet (taking care not to burn, of course), warm blankets or rugs, a cushion for the head, which can often be got from a nearby farm or passing car, but it is a safe rule not to move anyone who may be suffering from internal or bad head injuries till the doctor comes. Hands can be rubbed, forehead bathed with cold water.

On rare occasions someone falls mixed up with their horse. If you are close fling yourself off your horse at once, get to the struggling horse and sit on his head, which immediately stops him struggling, and shout to other people to come and help drag the rider free. A stirrup-leather can be used to tie up the horse's legs if he is kicking. A horse on the ground loses his head entirely, and you must act quickly. A horse is a terribly heavy thing on one, and the novice should train herself into dealing quickly and efficiently with emergencies.

V. OPENING GATES

Every woman to hounds must be good with gates, and the art is only learnt by precept and practice.

Some horses are good at it, others are bad, or are allowed to be bad.

The first important rule to note is that the whip must always be held in the hand nearest the hinge of the gate. For instance, a gate opening towards you with the latch on your right and the hinge on your left—take your whip in the left (or hinge side) hand; ride your horse into a position nearly parallel with the gate, make him stand still, lean over, unlatch it with your whip-handle, still holding the gate with your whip rein him quietly back, then when sufficiently wide open, swing it away from you to walk through. You may have to catch it as it slams, before it can hit your horse on his quarters or hocks, and turn your horse round to re-latch it carefully if it has not shut on its own.

To open a gate *away from you with the hinge on your right* and the latch on your left, take your whip in the right hand, ride your horse straight up to the gate (i.e. at right angles to it) till he stands still with his head over it and his chest nearly against it; then put your right arm over his neck so that your right arm is then on the left side of your horse's head. Unlatch the gate (see Plate 26), and to prevent it closing again, if you are riding side-saddle, put your right foot against it for a moment, while you put your right arm and whip back over your horse's neck and push the gate gradually away from you as you walk through. (If riding astride put your left foot against gate, but you'll have to take foot out of stirrup.) Or, if you are on any horse used to opening gates and one that has been properly taught to do so, as you unlatch the gate you can at the same time kick your horse forward so that he pushes the gate with his chest, and thereby holds it open, while you are putting your whip back over his neck to push the gate. But of course this should only be done on a well-mannered horse that is used to doing it. One must look out riding strange horses in case they try to jump, so take care you do not use your hand or heel unintentionally.

Gates away from you can be quite easy if your horse takes an intelligent interest in the proceedings and condescends to

push at the proper time—when you have unlatched the gate (see Plates 26, 27 and 28).

Gates in various country-sides differ—there is the gate with the iron spring hasp, there is the Leicestershire gate with the easy latch that lifts, there is the little iron latch, there is the gate so beautifully hung that it opens with a touch, there is the brute that refuses to open, there is the fellow that resists all efforts to shut, there is the gate—often met with in the middle of a good run—composed of a harrow and half a bedstead, tied together with rope you hardly dare cut, and there is the maddening hand-gate, where two hundred jostle while horses pass one by one—more difficult than the gates of Paradise.

A novice should especially beware of fumbling at gates with a young horse, as if touched with a heel in error and perhaps impatient of the wait, he may try to jump. Nasty unnecessary mishaps have occurred through a loose balance-strap of a side-saddle getting caught in the hasp of a gate, or because the martingale or reins have got round the latch. The reins should, of course, always be held in the opposite hand to that required to open a gate. The right hand must *never* be used to open a gate with its hinge to your left—the sure mark of a tailor—nor must the hands be changed in the middle of the operation.

The second rule for good gate-opening is always to bring your horse up to the gate the correct way, that is either with his head towards the latch for a gate opening towards you, or with his head over the gate for one opening away. Third, always make him stand still quietly. It should be a point of honour with every young horsewoman during a hunt to catch a gate without fail when someone in front has been holding it for you. It is quite easy with a whip that has a sharp screw in the handle. Nothing is more maddening than to have a gate slammed in front of one by someone who has not even tried to catch it—admittedly it is difficult, and all of us make mistakes sometimes, especially on a side-saddle with a strong wind blowing and a pulling horse, but *the effort, anyhow, must be made*. An arm, hand, or foot can be used most effectively

PLATE 26

Right-hand gate away from you

(1)
*Unlatching
with right
band*



(2)
*Unlatches
and holds,
with right
foot*



(3)
*Pushing
open with
a hip*



(4)
*Walking
through*



(1)
Unlatching



(2)
*Pushing
open.*



Photos W D Moss

Left hand away from you

Note how arm is used both sides of horse's neck

A LESSON IN OPENING GATES BY LADY BLANCHE DOUGLAS

PLATE 27

Left-hand gate to you

(1)
*Right
way*



(2)
*Wrong
way*



(3)
*Coming
through*



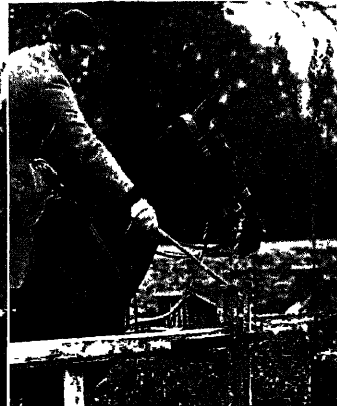
(4)
*Holding
open*



(1)
Unlatching



(2)
*Pulling
back*



Photos W D Moss

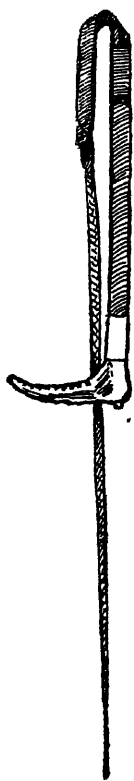
Right-hand gate to you

OPENING OF GATES (continued)

at times to catch a gate—and a good rider should be able to change her reins rapidly into either hand. Some people are inveterate sinners in this respect—they are never popular in a Hunt. For instance, once a man of this kind let a gate slam to after him, the lady coming up behind him was furious, and gave vent to her feelings audibly as she and another tussled with the gate. A distinguished foreigner overheard and pointed out a female ahead doing the same thing at the next gate. “Dam woman like your dam man.”

Always go up alongside to help a person struggling to lift a heavy gate; also to help push a gate opening *away*, but it is generally easier to open a gate *to* one single-handed, so keep clear then till it is your turn to catch it and pass through. It is the last rider's duty to shut the gate always, and if there is stock in the field this rule must be observed even when hounds are running their hardest.

With regard to hunting-whips—do not call them “crops”; whip is the older word. They should never be ornamented, except with a plain silver band on which it is useful to have your name and address inscribed. The “thong” should be properly put on to the keeper—a good groom will show you how, and you should learn to crack your whip properly on a horse, i.e. well in front and parallel to way you are going. The thong is used to curl round your hand to save a possibility of dropping your whip at an awkward gate—also to prevent hounds from coming near your horse's heels. A hunting-whip should always be carried as shown on Plate 8.



VI. LITTLE PRESENTS

Perhaps here one should point out to aspirant young horse-women not to forget the tips that it is the age-old custom of

the hunting-field to give to the hunt-servants upon whom our fun so much depends.

In fashionable countries the huntsman draws probably a regular and handsome allowance from a rich Field, but a surprising number of people evade their responsibilities in the matter on these grounds, without thought of the consequences. Hunt-servants are a very hard-working body of men, with no "eight-hour day," few holidays, little leisure, and often cramped and uncomfortable quarters; the most they can look forward to are the few vacancies that may occur in rich countries where they still have to work as hard, ride harder, and possibly put up with a lot of criticism and abuse from a largely ignorant Field, themselves constantly overriding hounds and seldom of the least assistance to the day's sport. If a huntsman does not jump everything he sees he will be voted slow, if he jumps an impossible place he may have a bad fall and be laid up for weeks, or even for ever, left to subsist on a minute allowance from the Hunt-servants' Benevolent Fund, and maybe leave his widow unprovided for.

The present increase in amateur huntsmen, excellent in some way as it may be, is hard on the coming generation of hunt-servants. A "Whip" has all the huntsman's risks, half his pay, and very much worse horses; most First-Whipper-ins are the bravest of the brave, and luckily generally as hard as nails! The new-comer to the hunting-field should acquaint herself of all the work behind the scenes done by those three quiet figures at the Meet, calm and collected, scrupulously clean and neat in appearance, eyes alert, missing not a stern wag among the thirty or so couple of valuable hounds in their charge. The degree of sport shown in the field is almost invariably the result of hours of hard work behind the scenes. The old saying, "half the foxes caught in a season are killed in kennel," means that careful feeding, scrupulous cleanliness, long arduous road work, good nursing in sickness, and attention to diet and grooming summer and winter, go to the making a pack of modern foxhounds fit enough to race down their quarry in the open—a

life's work which the majority in a big fashionable Field are unaware of.

A young horsewoman anxious to learn more of the Science of Hunting cannot do better than read carefully every word of Lord Willoughby de Broke's *Hunting the Fox*, and the volume on *Hunting* in the Lonsdale Library.

A fiver to the huntsman at Christmas, or the last day of the season, can well be spared by the regular follower who spends, say, £200 a year on her hunting.

CHAPTER IX

THE MAKING OF A YOUNG HORSE AND THE RIDING OF HIM TO HOUNDS

"The reasoned training of a horse is a mental gymnastic for the rider; it teaches him firmness, kindness, and patience and greatly develops his powers of observation. In training a horse a man also trains himself.

(CAPT. E. BEUDANT, *Horse Training—Outdoor and High School*, 1931.)

"Control yourself."

(Motto of Emperor Maximilian II (1459-1519).)

THIS is an art in itself, and efficiency is only to be learnt in the hard school of experience. And those aspiring to graduate must acquire the necessary qualifications, which mean:

- | | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| (1) A firm seat. | (4) Determination. |
| (2) Good hands. | (5) Patience. |
| (3) Good nerve. | |

Without all of which it is practically waste of time to attempt this by no means easy task, and will only end in failure—a spoilt horse—a ruffled temper—and a bashed-in hat (although the latter eventuality will probably materialize in any case!).

There can be no question that even the best horsewomen are handicapped from the start, in that, those who favour the side-saddle have both legs on one side—and it is obvious that they are not able to take that strong grip of the horse with their legs, which means so much to a young horse in keeping him straight at his fences, and letting him know he has got to go, when and where he is told to. Undoubtedly those who adopt the men's style, astride, are better situated; but one is bound to say, without fear of contradiction, that only five per cent of those who do, have the necessary firm seat to enable

them to ride very "rough" horses to Hounds, and really make them.¹

There is no question of their courage, but something more than that is so necessary, to enable the rider to get the best out of a young horse, and to find him improving every day. It is obvious, if a young horse is allowed to whip round at his fences when he feels inclined, this will soon become a habit—and it requires a very strong pair of legs, with the best of hands, to keep a really shifty horse straight, once this habit has been acquired. And, as previously stated, only about five per cent of the women who ride astride (probably a liberal estimate) are strong enough in their grip and "seat" to do this as it should be done, to really make a horse.

Also there are times when a young horse must be punished and corrected. Standing up on his hind-legs, continually refusing, kicking hounds or other horses, "napping it," etc., are examples when a liberal use of the whip has to be applied. (I say liberal, for unpleasant as it may be to have to do it, one has to be cruel to be kind, and a couple of lessons, if severe enough, are generally sufficient.) Now, very few women can, or know how to hit a horse—shall we say scientifically, and very few are strong enough to hold a horse with one hand, and admonish him with the other, so that he will respect the rider.

Do not think that by this to be a good "breaker" of young horses, one has to be brutal; far from it, kindness and perseverance is the best method to work on, but at times, as quoted, the alternative must be applied. Again, there are horses and horses, which vary in temperament and character, as much as human beings, and who will say that a really naughty boy does not benefit from an occasional application of the stick in the right hands! Some horses will almost "break" themselves from the very beginning of their early training, when being driven in long reins, and respond easily to the gentlest persuasion, seem to have receptive brains and to be

¹ There is no doubt that many women can "finish off" a green horse as well as most men, but that is different from making them from the start.

anxious to do all that is asked of them ; while others fight you from the word "go," and pit their strength, cunning, and maybe hereditary vice, against the person attempting to "break" them ; and with these one has to be very firm, and give them to understand you are "the boss."

The first rule of horse-breaking is to try and win your horse's confidence. Once you have done that, you are more than half-way to breaking and making him. Let him look upon you as a friend and a fair master, who will not ask him impossible questions. In other words, go slow, and do not try and teach him "to run before he can walk."

Let us take for example a four-year-old, just over from Ireland—bought in a Fair by somebody who has "an eye for an 'oss." This animal was possibly bred on a bog in Ireland—worked as a three-year-old, probably in the harrow, or "side-car," and very likely ridden bare-backed, but may have never had a saddle on, and so it is long odds against him even having had proper breaking tackle on him, or been "mouthed," or bitted, as we understand it. Now you can imagine what this horse feels like first time away from home, after the excitement of the Fair, and all the other horses and "humans" about. He is led at the end of a halter the following day, to the station, where he is pushed into a train, and taken to the quay—here loaded on to a boat, with or without others, and eventually after a rough or smooth crossing, as the fates may decree, he lands in England ; more trains, and eventually he arrives alone at your own stable.

Don't be disappointed if he looks a wretch and appears very nervous. Why shouldn't he after all he has been through, and what to him seems a lifetime, crammed into about forty-eight hours? Go easy now and give him time to settle down. He will want at least three days' rest to get over his first journey, and all the strange happenings. Put him in a big airy loose-box, and feed him on good, light food, with little or no corn, and a few nice mashes. Whenever you go into the box make a fuss of him, and let him look forward to your coming. He will very soon forget all about his horrible train and boat experi-

ence, and be quite at home. Look out for fear that he has caught a cold on the journey, which is more than likely, in which case, of course, same must be treated and no attempt made to start breaking him until it is quite cured. Once over this you can begin right away to handle him. If he is very "green," as our horse bred on the bog will be, put the "dumb-jockey" on him, in his box, every day, and see the reins are just the right length, and not too tight, making him overbend. Should the young horse have never been handled at all or had anything on his back or round his girth, even a "roller," it is as well for the first time or two to take him into a straw yard, with a long rein on him, as he will probably resent feeling the pressure at first, and may buck and kick. In the straw yard he will have plenty of room and less likely to slip up and injure himself than in a loose box. One or two lessons in the yard and it will be safe enough to do this in his stable. Put a breaking-bit in his mouth (i.e. a straight barred snaffle, with "keys" on it), and this can be continued for a week or two. This form of bit gives him something to play with, and assists greatly in "making his mouth." The first few days out lead him about and let him see everything. Introduce him to the blacksmith's shop, for most likely he has never had shoes on his feet in his life. Then put the "long reins" on him and drive him about, still with a breaking-bit in his mouth, and when you have him handy in the paddock, take him out on the roads, and drive him about these, and he can have a good look at all the fearsome road nuisances of to-day, and satisfy himself that they are not as bad as they appear, and will not interfere with him.

Go slow all the time. After a course of the long reins you can then get a saddle on him, and see that it fits (this is very important). And put up the right person to start his education. You must continue to go slow, and be content with riding him at a walk and a trot, for some time, all the time getting him used to the "leg-pressure," and paying special attention to the biting. By which I mean that the bit (an ordinary snaffle being now used, twisted or plain) lies right

in his mouth, and you get the pressure on the correct place—namely, the "bars" of the jaw. If too high it will wrinkle up his cheek, make it sore, and worry him. If too low it will not be resting on the "bars," and he will learn to get his tongue over it, which is a very bad habit indeed. Get him to answer the slightest indication of your leg or hand—a horse does not reason, but is very quick at connecting things. Thus, if whenever you pull him to the right by his rein, at the same time draw your left leg back, and touch him with your heel behind his girths, he will connect the one with the other, and a well-schooled horse will answer the leg just as readily as he will the hand. Having got so far, and you can ride your horse across a field, or up a road, without him "rolling" all over the place, you can allow him to canter. This must be done in a "collected" way—the horse balanced under you, his head in the right place, and not allowed to "sprawl." Do not attempt to gallop him; make sure that he is riding right in all his slow paces first, and the galloping and jumping can come later. You cannot hurry his education—he must learn one thing at a time, and that well before you go on to the next step.

While the horse is being ridden about in this way, it is as well to educate him at gates, making him go up to one and stand still, allowing you to fumble about with the catch, and walk through when told to. Turn him round, whether the gate shuts or not, and make him go up to it, and again stand still. Never try and hurry a young horse through a gate, until it is properly open, and you are in a position to open it wider still, and prevent any possibility of it slamming on to his quarters, before the horse is clear. A young horse is easily spoilt and made nervous at gates if he gets pinched in one, or it bangs on his hocks, and you will find him a perfect nuisance out hunting later. He is just as readily made sensible by taking the necessary precautions, and giving him plenty of practice. Also get him used to a whip being swung and cracked on him, which with some horses requires a lot of patience. Remember what a horse becomes accustomed to, develops into a habit, so in the breaking of him accustom him to do the right thing

always. If he is used to jumping by himself, he will have no thought of refusing, if he is made to stand still at gates, and walk slowly through, he will have no thought of rushing through. If he is made to stand still when you want to get on or off, he won't want to "cruise" about. If he is not allowed to stand on his hind-legs, kick, buck, or go one way when you want to go the other, without the very grave risk of corporal punishment, he will put two and two together and think he had better be good after all !

His education having got as far as this, all having been done in a snaffle, you can now ride him in a double-bridle, seeing that the curb-chain is loose. If a very light-mouthed horse, he may resent this bridle at first, but your pair of light hands will soon give him confidence, and he will get used to the extra severity, and will bend, and "answer the helm" more readily than he has done in a snaffle, and consequently will be a greater pleasure to ride.

You may find the double-bridle you have chosen does not suit your horse. He "bores" in it, or gets his head up too much perhaps. After a fair trial, and you are still of the same opinion, change it, to a less or more severe one, as the occasion may demand, and continue until you are satisfied that you have found the right article. Some horses have very difficult mouths to suit, and if badly ridden, develop really awkward mouths, and get the name of being unrideable. There is a saying, "There is a key to every horse's mouth," and one is inclined to agree. You hear people saying : "If only I could find the right bridle for this horse—I have tried everything." Remember, the bridle has only about twenty-five per cent to do with it—the other seventy-five is the "fingers" on the reins !

We have by now got our horse riding well. He is balanced—that is, will walk, trot, and canter with a loose rein if necessary, maintaining his head (which is a horse's "balancing-pole") in the correct position, bends nicely to his bridle when you tighten the reins, and understands the leg-pressure and responds to it. He is nice and handy at gates, and will not

be nervous on the roads. You can now start his jumping career—and again go slow. Nothing is too small to first ask him to negotiate—a pole on the ground he can step over even, is all to the good. You may be the fortunate owner of a "jumping-lane," or an enclosed circular "school," with fences built round the outside, into which a horse may be turned loose and "driven" round. And if this is the case, it is a very good and safe way of starting his jumping education. But see to it that what he is asked to jump at the outset is very low, and vary the fences. Such as : No. 1 a pole, two feet from the ground ; No. 2 a small "brush" fence, but strong ; No. 3 a narrow plain ditch ; No. 4 a wall, again about two feet high, and so on. These low fences will give him confidence, and most horses learn how to negotiate them very quickly, in fact, after a morning or two, in all probability he will, on being turned loose in the "school," go and jump them on his own, with little or no "driving." You can now gradually increase the height of the obstacles, until you have the pole up to say 3 ft. 6 ins. and he is jumping it cleanly.

The horse having now learned to "leave the ground," you can commence riding him over a few natural fences. There is no question that the best way to make him is to be on his back, and not overdo the "school" part. (An Irish dealer, on being asked how he schooled his horse to jump, replied, "I just lounge them a couple of times over a pole, and then put up a brave man of no importance !")

Don't bother about having another horse to give you a lead. Get him to do it on his own, without refusing—probably a little more trouble at first, but resulting in a bold, self-reliant horse in the end. If you have land of your own, it will be simple enough. Failing this, there is always a good-natured, sporting farmer, who will, if you make yourself pleasant, grant you permission to have a "pop" over one or two of his fences, especially if you are prepared to make good any damage you may do to them. (N.B.—Do it at once, before his cattle get out through the gap you have made, or you will not be so popular next time you go for a "school" !) Again, don't be

in a hurry ; it will do at first to jump the smallest place in the fence, and if he does this well, don't ask him to do it twenty times, but go on and find another small place, and let him "pop" over this. Try and get his confidence, and he will soon know that you are not asking him anything beyond his powers, and he will think it great fun, and when you give him a "squeeze," and canter him on towards the place in the fence you want him to jump, he will "cock his ears," just quicken slightly under you as he approaches it, and as he feels you "give him the office" (a touch with both heels at the same moment), he will take off and "sail on" into the next field, and land like a "leaf on a pond !" And you then realize what a good thing life is, and what a joy to have a good horse under you, and how clever you are at having made him, and how easy it really all is !

Of course, they are not all like this, but your dealer-friend, "with an eye for an 'oss," has noticed that nice straight hind-leg, with the well-shaped hock near the ground ; the strong muscular quarters and thighs ; the slightly prominent rump-bone, all of which gives the necessary power to lift over the fences, also the long sloping shoulders, well set-back in his frame, which enables him to land as light as a feather ; that nice lean head and fine ears, denoting good breeding, and well set, on a long, good-shaped neck, which ensures good balance if properly "nagged," and the big, bold, kind eye, which goes with good temper, courage, and determination to be "with them," when hounds are really running.

And so it is, that your horse is "coming to hand" nicely, and you are on the best of terms with him. You can now introduce him to larger and more varied obstacles, not forgetting the fence with the ditch towards you, teaching him to stand back, and be bold. *But only little by little, and never sicken him of it.* Four or five fences a day, properly negotiated, and in a course of a couple of hours' ride, are quite enough. Let him "slide along" every morning for a couple of furlongs, keeping him nicely balanced, and within himself, thus teaching him to gallop, and to "put his toe in the right place," and

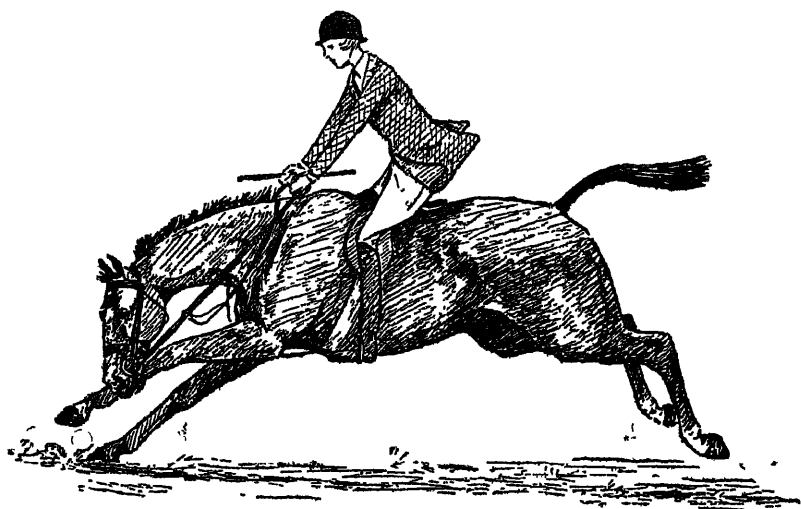
his lessons will become a pleasure, and he hardly realizes he is "at school."

Presumably, as you have bought a four-year-old, all this will have been done in the summer and early autumn. And the jumping education coming last, has given the ground a chance of becoming a bit softer. The horse by now is "rising five," and quite time, you will say, he has a look at hounds. Well, cub-hunting has started, so why not take the first opportunity.

One fine morning sees you at covert side at six o'clock, hounds are already "hard at it," and there's quite a good "cry." Not many people about at present—a few on foot inside the covert, and half a dozen on horses round it, besides the hunt-servants. You will be quite a popular arrival, as there is a big space on one side of the covert, with nobody there, where a cub may slip away, and you are asked to stand there. It will probably surprise you that your young horse is so good-mannered. He doesn't seem to mind the other horses standing about, and only takes a slight interest in the cry of hounds. This is frequently the case with young horses, as they have not yet learned to connect it with anything very exciting. But after a few mornings, when you have with several others galloped off a time or two to turn a cub back, he will begin to take notice and think there is something in this early morning ride after all! And you will find him listening to hounds in covert, and to the sound of the horn; he will be watching other horses and wondering when it will be his turn to gallop off to help head a cub back! And so far from standing still, as he did his first morning or two, he starts to sweat, "paws" at the ground, walks backwards, and generally makes himself a nuisance. When he is like this, don't try to make him stand still. It will upset him more. Let him walk round, in a circle if you like, and bring him back to the place you have left, stay there a moment or two, and then repeat the movement, and forgive him his restlessness; after all, it is only natural, and nothing is to be gained by trying to correct him. You can then let him have a good look all round the covert, trot-

ting and cantering him, and let him see all that there is to be seen. Don't try to take him into the covert, however big it may be : it will only probably end in disaster ; you will get in the huntsman's way, and possibly kick a hound, especially as the " young entry " are not yet used to strange horses, and imagine they are all like the hunt-servants' cub-hunters, and they can crawl round, and under them, with impunity ! After a week or two of this, hounds will be meeting later, cubs getting stronger, young hounds getting wise, horses getting fitter ; and one morning, after giving a litter of cubs a good " dusting " in the covert, and killing a brace, one is allowed to slip away. Now your young horse will have his first taste of hounds in the open, and it will open his eyes a lot—and if by good fortune they happen to run over a line of country that is not too " blind," and fences fairly jumpable, now is your chance to indulge in a really good school. As you have got him to jump at home in " cold blood " and without a lead, he will have no thought of refusing. At the same time he will probably be a great deal more impetuous, what with the excitement of hounds in front and horses all round him, and you will possibly find he takes a great deal more riding at his fences than you anticipated, and maybe is not jumping them nearly as well as he did at home. What has happened to all those hours you put in at making him carry his head in the right place ? One moment it is in your face, the next moment you can't see it, it's somewhere between his knees, and he's " raking " at you like blazes ! And the mouth you thought so light, and you had made so well ! Surely this is not the horse you rode yesterday and the day before ? It is though, only now his blood is up, and that hitherto dormant instinct of following hounds has sprung to life, and it has gone to his head, and his one idea is to gallop, and temporarily he forgets all he has learnt. And although you " gave him the office " at just the right time at the last fence, he quite ignored it and all but came to grief ! Now is the time when your good horsemanship and experience stands you in good stead, and the more flustered your young horse becomes, the cooler you should be,

instinctively doing the correct thing at the right moment, doing your best to get him balanced with a firm grip of your legs, pulling him back until he is going nicely within himself, and keeping well clear of the other competitors. Picking out the best places in the fences, avoiding the gaps (although there won't be many this time of the year), and not jumping too near a gate, whether shut or open. Our cub has soon had enough, and lies down in a hedgerow, where the First Whip, "with an eye like a hawk," has spotted him! And so "who



"Raking" at you like blazes.

'oop!" and here ends our young horse's first experience of the "real thing." Not quite, for be sure and keep him well away from hounds when they are "breaking their fox up," as the smell of blood is pretty certain to make him want to kick at anything within reach. So take him right away up wind, get off him, loosen his girths, and lead him about, as you will find him "all of a lather," and you don't want him to catch cold and start coughing.

Take him home at a nice steady pace, and see that he is properly "done" after arrival. You may find that it will take him a day or two to settle down properly, after this first excitement, and you will see him standing listening in the stable,

with his head on one side, and his ears pricked, for any strange noises, and perhaps being a little "shy" of his food. But unless your horse is very highly strung (which I hope, for both your sake and your head man's, he will not be, as that means you will have great difficulty in keeping flesh on him) he will soon be himself again, and have "his head in his manger" as usual, and ready for another morning with hounds.

You will now be in the month of October. The corn will all be harvested, and fields of stubble taking its place, generally affording excellent going this time of year, the corn having sheltered it from the sun, and the ground not having become baked. Many fox-hunters vote this month the best of the season, for they have practically done with "holding up" the cubs (which will, after all, cease to be cubs in a few weeks' time, for the first of November they are all foxes, irrespective of age!) and many a good hunt with an enterprising cub, or even an old fox, has been had in October. And what a blessing not to have to "dress up," for any neat "rat-catching" clothes are quite in order! A soft hat to start with and a bowler as things begin to look more like a dart in the open. (The country will be blind, so look out and don't do anything silly!)

You will take every opportunity in this month of continuing your horse's education, and get him out hunting as much as possible without overdoing him, and getting him tired, for you must remember he is still a long way from fit, and only rising five. The experience he will get in this way will be invaluable to him. And by the first of November, when the "real thing" starts, you should be at the covert side on a far from green horse. You will probably find that the crowd will worry him a bit, and all the jostling in the gateways, people scheming for a start, fresh horses, many being badly ridden, the stampede down the first field or two—which often goes to even an old horse's head. It is as well to keep your young horse out of all the hustle and bustle as much as you can, and, moreover, until you are quite sure he is not going to "use his heels" in a gateway, when amongst the crowd it is hardly

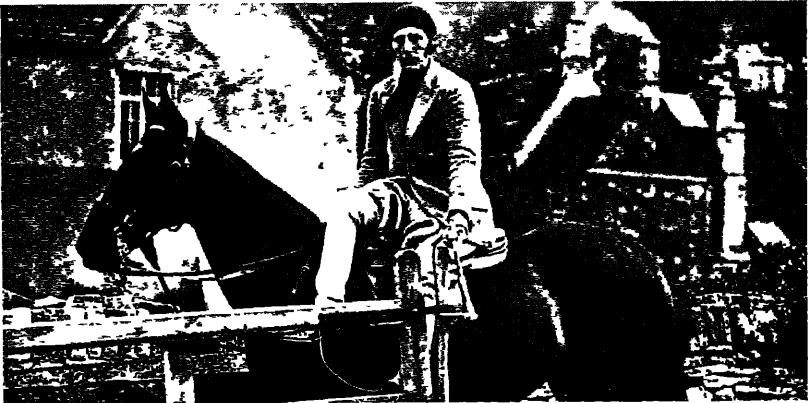
fair on others to push your way in. At the same time, you want to see all you can of the morning's sport, for unless you have a second horse out, you and your young horse will have to be going homewards by two o'clock.

You can often overdo this "trotting about" behind on young horses and only jumping a small obstacle with a lead. With the education you have already given him, there is no reason why you should not let him "sail along" to the front, and keep as near hounds as possible. He will learn a good deal more there, and twice as quickly, and if of an impetuous nature will go twice as well with you, for the odds are he will only fret more at the back, with everyone passing him, and having to pull him up to take his turn at the only jumpable place in the fence. There is far less crowding up in front; more room to see, and easier to pick your place in the fences, and he will appreciate being in sight of hounds, and hearing their cry, as much as you do. One thing is certain, those who do adopt these tactics can make three horses, while the other person, who keeps them behind, is making one. The former may get a few more falls, but, after all, "if you want omelettes, eggs have to be broken."

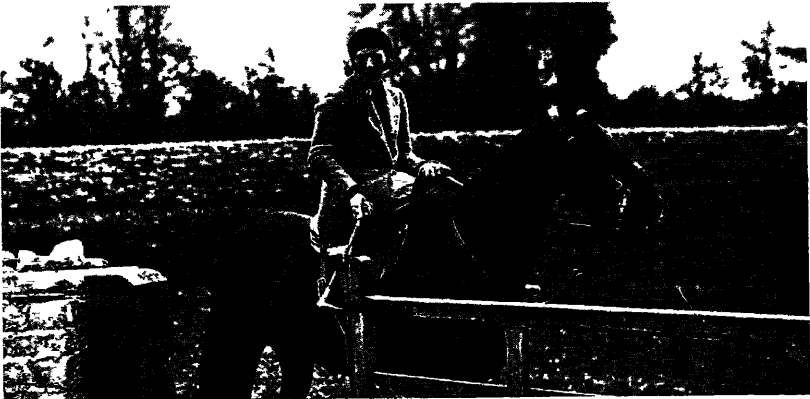
Especially for those who ride astride there is a great art in knowing how to fall, and many of what would otherwise be bad tosses, resulting in injury to the rider, can be avoided. Of course, "stick to the ship" as long as you can, if a horse pecks or makes a mistake, and "pick him up" if possible; but when you feel a horse under you is meeting a fence all wrong, hits it half-way up, and you feel his quarters rising, no power on earth can save him from "tipping up," so there is no object in your being underneath, when the inevitable happens. Just "loosen up" your grip immediately, and it's odds on that the impetus will throw you clear, whereas if you'd clung on to the saddle with your legs, underneath you'd be. Many of the worst falls are over timber, and the reason being that one has always been taught to go extra slow at that sort of fence. Now if that timber is new and strong, and a horse hits it in front he will "tip up" behind, and land on his back the



Left hand to you



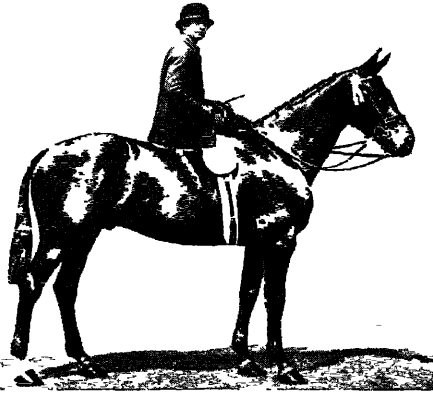
Left hand away from you



Right hand away from you

Photos W D Moss

THE RIGHT WAY TO HOLD GATES OPEN



Lady Hunloke

Photo W A Rouch



*The Hon
Mrs Campbell*

Photo W A Rouch



*The Hon
Mrs Mundy*

Photo Poole, Waterford

*THREE OF THE BEST WOMEN JUDGES OF HUNTERS AND HACKS
IN THE SHOW-RING*

other side with the rider underneath, because the timber has stopped the impetus of the horse's forehand, but not the weight of his body and hind-quarters, which carry on and result in a somersault, and as he was going extra slow, the rider had not enough "way" to get clear. Now if we disregard the "slow at timber" theory, and allow our young horse to go at it a nice steady pace, should he make a bad "bloomer," hitting it hard in front, as soon as you feel the quarters lifting, "loosen up," and you will again fall clear. Most of those who have "schooled" a great deal and ridden young horses all their lives will agree that one can generally anticipate when a horse has no chance of recovery long before he meets the ground, and that you must "quit the ship" in time if you are not to be caught underneath.

You will probably say (when you have read this), there doesn't seem to be very much, after all, in this "making and riding of a young horse," and it looks as if anyone could do it, if they set about it in the right way. You would be right, it is just the "knowing how" that counts and instinctively doing the right thing at the right moment. Perhaps a good definition of a real horseman or horsewoman is, that all horses seem to go alike with them, and you cannot tell by watching them if the animal they are riding is a difficult or an easy one.

Anticipation of what a horse is likely to do next is one of the secrets of success in riding "rough" horses, enabling one to use the necessary antidote before the evil develops. This only comes with great experience and observance, and in time becomes almost automatic. You can learn a lot from watching a horse's ears, they are two very good indicators of what may be in store for the rider. And you mustn't be misled, if they are nicely "pricked," into thinking your "half-broken" horse is quite at his ease with himself and his rider. For a horse's ears are never closer together than when he is preparing to buck, and actually bucking. If you would like to test this for yourself one morning, when your youngster is "on his toes" and feeling well, run your thumbs up his neck (a sure

CHAPTER X

OFFSHOOTS OF HUNTING—SHOWING, POINT-TO-POINTS, AND HUNTER TRIALS

“If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster and treat those two impostors just the same. . . .”—(KIPLING.)

ON SHOWING

BEFORE the novice buys a horse to show or contemplates showing one she already has, she should ask the advice of some really good judge of a horse and make sure that hers is most of what is required in a show-horse. This may save a lot of disappointment and expense in entry fees, etc. Showing can be the greatest fun and very lucrative if you are successful, and it can be just the reverse.

It is no good showing a small horse in hunter classes—he should be, anyhow, 16 hands for big shows. For a small country show, he could be smaller.¹

His conformation must be right, and it is most important that he should be a good ride and move really well in all paces—also he must go “straight” when “run in hand.” This means that the judges before awarding the prizes have the horses trotted up and down with the saddles off, and if a horse “dishes”—turning or throwing his feet out as he trots—it is a great crab, and he is certain to be put down in the order of prize-giving. He must also stand “true on his limbs,” i.e. not stand with his feet turned out or in.

In a big show-ring as at Richmond you want a horse that really gallops, and moves well galloping—it is not half so important in a small enclosed ring like at Olympia.

In showing a hunter it is *essential he should be entered in the*

¹ If very perfect and with good manners he might be entered in a hack class.

right class according to the weight he is up to. It is useless showing a light-weight horse in a heavy-weight class, or vice versa. The novice should be sure to ask the advice of someone who knows which class to enter her horse in, otherwise however good-looking the horse may be, if the judge considers him either above or below the allotted weight to the class, he will either disregard him completely or have him turned out of the ring—which is most annoying and disappointing when you have had all the trouble and expense connected with showing.

A hunter shown at Olympia must have good manners and be sensible, as it is a frightening place for a horse with all the flowers, the band playing, people clapping, and the lights in the evening.

If possible it is a good thing to take a horse to a small show before embarking on a big one—especially is it wise when showing a hack. A show hack *must* have perfect manners—however good-looking he may be he will never win prizes unless he is good-mannered as well. Also it is even more important for him to be a good ride and move well, than for a hunter; he must have a good mouth, bend his head nicely, and in no way be inclined to be “nappy.” He must, of course, be well “schooled,” that is, taught to walk well and trot and canter very slowly, to do a figure of eight at a slow canter, and “change his legs” in the middle of it when asked to, and yet be “united,” i.e. if a hack is being cantered in a right-handed circle he must canter leading with his off fore-leg and off hind—and if in a left-handed circle, with his near fore and near hind—therefore if cantering in a figure of eight the rider must make his animal “change” his legs simultaneously, and the really high-schooled hack will do this almost imperceptibly, even when asked to when cantering in a straight line. He must also “rein-back” and stand quite still when wanted to in the middle of the ring, and when his rider gets on him.

In a show-hack temperament plays a very important part, and it is often difficult to find one with the essential amount of courage to give a good “show” without losing his

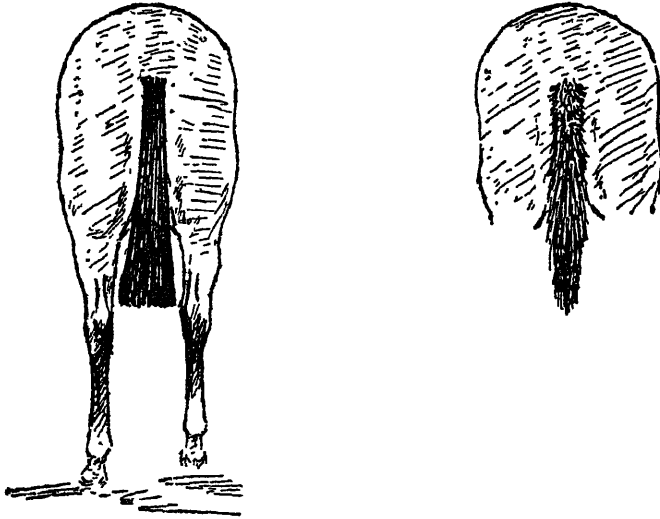
manners. On the other hand, he must not be too much on the lazy side.

Of course, in preparing a hunter or a hack for the showing feeding is most important. It is wonderful the difference it can make to the show-hack's manners, giving him very little, or no corn!—and it is quite *easy to get him looking just as well without it*. Some owners go to a lot of trouble to get their hacks well schooled to the noises and sights of a show-ring, before showing one for the first time. They will hire the local band, and collect as many onlookers as possible to cheer and wave flags, etc. This is an excellent plan, but for some people, rather a difficult and expensive one!

A hunter needs to be got very fit indeed. In a big showing, by the time he has been really galloped round it several times, first by his rider, and later by both judges in turn, he will have had quite a lot to do—and an unfit horse "fat inside" will get extremely blown, especially on a hot day, and not do himself justice. Therefore he will want, besides long slow work, several gallops, or "pipe openers," before he is taken to a show.

The difficulty is that in the late spring or summer the ground is usually hard, and you do not want to gallop your valuable horse round a hard grass field as fast as you can! The best plan then is to find a field of light plough, or what is called "scuffle," and give him a gallop or two round that. He must also have plenty of "strapping"—at least an hour a day—to get a good "bloom" on his coat, and to put the muscle on him. Some horses pay to look very "big" in condition, others do not, so it is a mistake to get a horse looking too gross who is inclined to be "coachy," or rather too thick in his neck and shoulders. Of course, horses vary a lot in strange stables. Some do not mind; others worry and do not feed as well as they do at home. So if you have to send your horse away to shows some distance off, and you think he will not feed well while away, you can afford to have him on the "big" side. It is surprising the difference it can make to a horse's appearance in a very short time. A week stabled at

Olympia, for instance, with all the noise and strange surroundings, will upset some horses very much, and they will not look half so well at the end of it.



A good tail and a bad one.

A show-horse or hack should be very well turned out. A good tail, well pulled but not too much (never allow it to be thinned out with scissors), squared and full at the bottom, with



A badly plaited mane and a good.

a beautifully plaited mane, makes all the difference to a horse's appearance. There is a great art in plaiting a horse's mane really well. Never more than five plaits, and each one should be turned up at the end, and sewn, so that they look like knots. A good saddle and bridle also make a lot of difference. On no

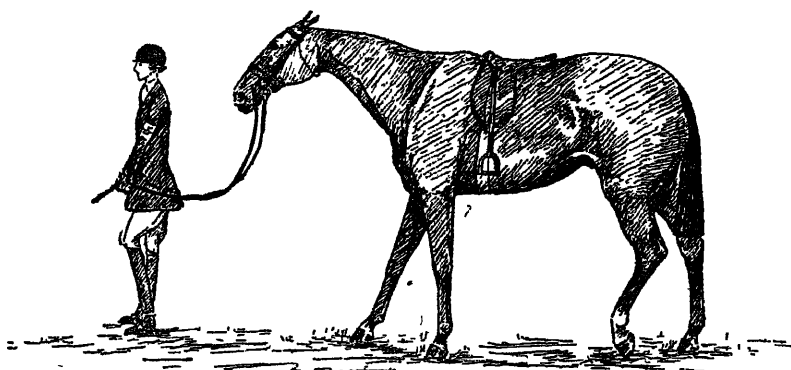
account must the bridle be covered with buckles, and you must never show a horse in a snaffle bridle, or any sort of martingale (it is done, though, in Ireland). Make sure your horse has the right bridle on, and one he goes in well, and the curb-chain not too tight. Otherwise he will not please the judge when he rides him if he carries his head badly, and either puts it down between his knees, or hits him in the face with it!

If you are riding your horse side-saddle in a class, and you think you have a good chance of being "in the money," don't be in a hurry to have your saddle put on again after you have run your horse in hand. Very often, if the judge cannot quite make up his mind between two horses, that is the time when he will have them both stood in front of him to compare them, and the near side view of a side-saddle is most unbecoming to any horse, hiding his shoulder and making him look shorter in front than he is.

In the ring there is quite an art in getting a horse to stand well, and to look his best in the ring, while he is being judged, and you always want to remember this, and not let your horse stand "all anyhow." You may think it doesn't matter for a few minutes because the judge is not looking your way. But he may do so without you noticing, and he may think he sees some fault he had not noticed before, when you had the horse standing properly. A horse nearly always looks his worst when standing badly, and may even look as if he had some fault that he has not really got. Therefore you want to keep your attention on your own horse *all the time*. Have him standing right and always keep him looking his best, and interested all the time. Never try and put yourself higher up in the order the horses have been called in than where you are told to stand. Nothing looks so silly, or worse, than two competitors trying to get one in front of the other for a higher place! It won't make any difference to the judge. It will probably only annoy him or her, and as a very famous show-ring rider once said: "It is far better to be moved up than moved down." You also often see a competitor striving to

get into the ring first, which is very stupid, and why the judge should like a horse best because he is going first, we can never make out! ¹

When you are trotting or galloping round the ring, keep a fair distance behind the horse in front of you, if possible, and on no account get all crowded up with others just as you are passing the judge, and be sure you have your horse "leading" with the correct leg for whichever way you are cantering or galloping round the ring. Riding side-saddle it is much more difficult to make a horse change his legs. Therefore if you find your horse is on the wrong leg, pull him up into a trot,



A horse looks his worst when standing badly.

and as you are going round a corner in the show-ring—say to your right—tighten your off-rein and kick him into a canter at the same time, and he will invariably lead off with his off leg.

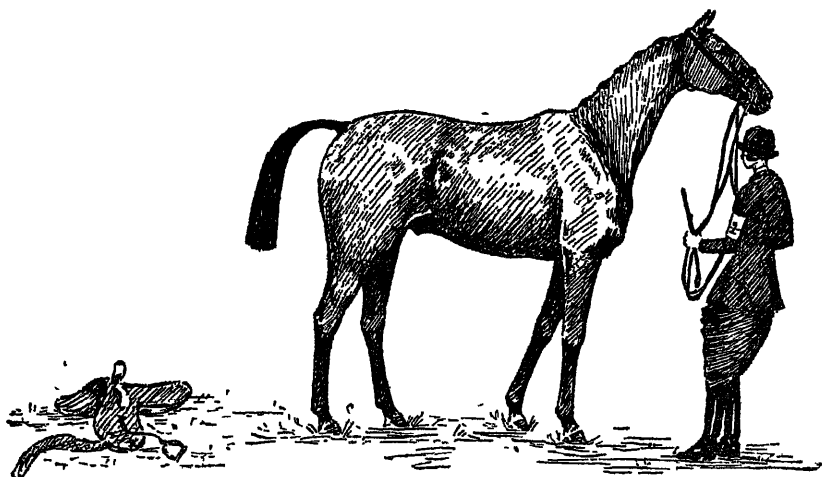
When you are told to "run your horse in hand," walk him away from the judge, say twenty yards, turn him round to the right. Don't turn to the left yourself and drag him round after you as it looks bad, and you may get kicked. Then trot him back straight and slowly, leaving his head alone. You should practice doing this before a show, and teach your horse to do it well without you having to look at him. It doesn't

¹ Of course, this does not apply if the horse you are riding is fussy and won't settle if he is behind.

look nice if he sticks out his head and hangs back, and won't trot when you start running.

Finally, even if you feel very disappointed when you get beaten, always try and make the best of it, and look as cheerful as possible.

After all, showing should be a pleasant occupation—not too



Have him standing right and looking his best.

serious a one ! So never refuse to accept the rosette which is handed to you, or ride out of the ring in a rage, as has been seen done many times, one regrets to say ! You can't always win—but it is very nice when you do !

POINT-TO-POINTS AND HUNTER TRIALS

Point-to-Points have become an almost integral part of the hunting season. Started originally as a sporting contest among the members of a Hunt—literally a cross-country ride from one "point" to another and back again—they have of late years developed into a hybrid form of racing and completely different from the old friendly competition across country in which the ride was the main object and the relatively few spectators rode a line of their own on the inner circle to watch the performance of their friends, as can be seen in many

of the old sporting prints. Nowadays the main object of a Point-to-Point Meeting is :

(1) To provide a free day's sport for the country-side, particularly non-hunting farmers and the like, whose goodwill makes hunting possible.

(2) To raise some of the money that is increasingly necessary to help run a country in modern times. The altered conditions require a much more elaborate organization, the chief of which being a course that can be easily viewed for the greater part by a large number of spectators, many of whom pay for the privilege of bringing in their cars. Above all things they like several races with a goodly number of runners and close finishes. The M.P.C. and N.H.C. endeavour to prevent Point-to-Points from encroaching on genuine Steeplechase prerogatives, but for various obvious reasons it is impossible to maintain the old traditions of a real Point-to-Point now that money-making and tight finishes are required. If one person keeps a horse for Point-to-Pointing others must, and if one Hunt puts up made fences others will follow suit. Hunting and racing are two such different things that they can never be satisfactorily combined, but with the British genius for compromises something has been evolved that gives a very pleasant day out to a lot of people who would not otherwise be interested in hunting, with very little damage to other people and generally giving satisfaction to the Hunt treasurer.

Point-to-Points have become a practice-ground for budding National Hunt riders, and many a valuable steeplechase winner has made his debut at the local point-to-point.

The only pity is that the conditions are usually such that the "genuine hunter," unless specially prepared, never gets a look in. Of late years Women's Point-to-Point Races have become extremely popular. For some time previously they had been popular in Ireland where women were allowed to compete in men's races, but in England, where perhaps conditions are more exacting, courses more artificial, and competition more professional, this practice very rightly was condemned. Gradually races for women riders only were

introduced and immediately caught on, attracting hard-riding "girls" of all ages, and from being at first mere travesties of racing, they quickly became one of the most popular events on the Card at many Point-to-Point Meetings. There is no doubt that there is a modern tendency among Point-to-Point Committees to eliminate all probable causes of falls, "traps," sharp turns, and obstacles native only to the locality and so forth, thus attracting large fields of good riders ready to ride a sort of glorified hurdle race. Naturally the genuine hunter has no place where this practice is general, but there is increasingly no reason why an average good woman with a suitable horse should not compete at the local Point-to-Point in the Ladies' Race. The "dangers" are probably not so great as in the average day's hunting where wire, slippery roads, and rabbit-holes account for the majority of serious accidents in a season; these bugbears of hunting being entirely eliminated on the modern Point-to-Point course. In many ways the sporting spirit of the old days lives again, because so far no women can be said to "live for (and by) Point-to-Pointing," and probably there is not yet a woman who has bought a horse with the sole object of winning "pots," riding herself. The result is that genuine hunters still have a good chance in the local Point-to-Point Ladies' Race, and one imagines that few Masters of Hounds have any difficulty in giving the fair aspirant a certificate that her entry has been "fairly and regularly hunted" all season. (One may say in passing, that the said aspirant would be probably quite unable to ride the genuine article, that beautiful blood race-horse so carefully sharpened over hurdles and appearing for a short time the requisite amount of days out hunting!)

However, even in the Ladies' Race, a high degree of *fitness* is required for all horses with a reasonable chance of winning, and it will become more marked every year.

No woman should consider riding her hunter in the local race without due regard to his and her preparation beforehand.

The novice may have an idea that the best way to prepare a

horse is to ride him over large obstacles daily, and her groom may suggest long gallops "to see how he goes." Nothing could be worse than both of these plans.

Of course hunting, of itself, cannot fit a horse for a modern Point-to-Point entirely; first, because he must learn to re-adjust his balance for jumping fences at the increased pace necessary; and second, his lungs must be accustomed gradually to the difference between hunting pace and racing. The fact that a horse can do an eight-mile point out hunting is no certainty that he will know how, or be able, to do three and a half miles galloping over some twenty-five fences all the time nearly as fast as he is able. The fact that you yourself can do a long day's walking over the hills in Scotland does not mean that you are fit to climb Mount Everest or win a running race. It is exactly the same with your hunter.

Admitting that preparation is necessary in order that your horse can give of his very best on the day, you will also want to hunt your Point-to-Point horse and probably best hunter as long as you can, subject to him being as "fit" for his race on the day as ingenuity can make him.

We assume that you have in mind one or two Meetings in your locality about a week or so apart. It should be understood from the beginning that it is a relatively easy job to get a horse ready for one event, but not so easy to keep him at concert pitch for a considerable period—none but an expert can hope to do so with success.

It is a reasonably easy task for even a novice to get her horse ready for the local Point-to-Points if she keeps these facts religiously in mind:

(1) That a hunter must have at least a month's preparation to give him a good chance to win a modern Point-to-Point race in good company.

(2) We must consider the individual horse. Of course, it is a platitude to point out that no two horses are alike in temperament and so on, but we presume that our entry has had a fair season's hunting, has not suffered any major injury to keep him unsound lately for any length of time, and that he

is a "good doer" and fit and well. Any otherwise are hardly worth a novice or her groom attempting to get right.

(3) The next step is to arrange absolutely regular hours of feeding, grooming, work, and rest, which must be rigidly adhered to during this month. What these hours are does not matter so much so long as the programme is adhered to regularly, the idea behind it being that constant regularity tends to counteract the excitability, nervous tension, and consequent staleness and loss of condition which are almost invariable effects of really fast work on a highly-strung temperament.

(4) Remember that over-stuffing is worse than useless. An attack of indigestion will spoil your chances and possibly start troubles (internal and external). Fifteen pounds of corn daily is the most an average horse can digest thoroughly (it rather depends on the size of the horse).

(5) Anything in the nature of strong "tonics," etc., is ruinous to a horse's constitution.

(6) Arrange to work your horse in company, as horses are gregarious animals. You will do much better if you are able to put your horse under the supervision of a man or woman *really experienced and successful* with preparing and running horses in Point-to-Points. If this person tells you that your horse is not fast enough, or good enough, you will be wise to give up ideas of racing him—many a good useful hunter has been broken down in preparing him for racing. If, however, you are encouraged to proceed and have to depend on your own and your groom's efforts to get him fit, the following notes by a successful lady owner, training her own horses, may assist you, but it should always be remembered that it is impossible to lay down hard and fast rules for preparing Point-to-Point horses, as not only do conditions vary, going, class you may be up against, etc., but individual horses are so totally dissimilar in the amount of work they require and can do. A long frost may upset all your plans. Adaptation to a variety of circumstances is the art of a successful trainer of race-horses.

You can begin the period of *preparation* by resting your

horse for a week, except for two hours daily walking and trotting exercise ; slow trotting up steep hills on the roads is most useful for getting the muscles right. This week will help him to get used to the regular hours, rejuvenate tired tendons and feet, and will serve to put him in that mental condition we humans call "keen" and what stablemen refer to as "on his toes."

The preparation has two aims : (1) Schooling him to jump at a faster pace than he has been accustomed to ; (2) Training him to "get" whatever distance the race is that you are going in for, i.e. his lungs and muscular development.

SCHOOLING

The schooling ground should be a fair-sized field with good going, preferably long and narrow, so that your three fences can be built in a straight line up one side of it and your hurdles up the middle of it.

You should school as little as possible, and remember that a horse invariably jumps better and more freely in a race. *Confidence* is the key-note to aim at in schooling.

You should start over small obstacles—three flights of sheep hurdles will do. They should be rammed well into the ground, slightly sloped away, thickly gorsed, well winged and about four feet high in all. It is a good thing if they can be approached slightly up-hill, and it is much better to have them close together (about eighty yards between each flight) rather than spread out with a long gallop in between. Start at a fairly moderate pace, gradually sharpening as the horse gains confidence. Our hunter knows how to jump at hunting pace and is not given to refusing, is bold and loves galloping on—our object is to teach him to take off in his stride. You cannot "place" a horse racing as you did hunting ; he has to learn to take-off wherever he finds himself. He will probably soon learn.

When proficient over the hurdles you can then put him over three or four made-up (slightly smaller than regulation) fences

in the same way, gradually increasing the pace till he has complete confidence. For a horse that already knows *how* to jump two or three "schools" during the period of his training should be quite sufficient, and you will find that by this sharpening-up he will have learnt to go well into his bridle, to adjust his balance to jumping at racing pace and to jump freely with boldness and confidence, landing well out over each fence, making up ground and not losing it, as is so often the case at "hunting pace." This is the whole art of converting a hunter into a race-horse—making ground over every fence.

If you overdo the schooling he may get careless, but the average good hunter not over-schooled will quickly appreciate that he cannot take liberties with his first Point-to-Point fences.

The usual cause of a horse hitting things going fast is that he is unaccustomed to jumping at that pace, but a good jumper with a few schools at a good pace will soon learn to "stand away" from his fences. Do not forget to put him over a fence with a ditch to you and guard-rail.

TRAINING

For this you require a large field so that you can gallop your mile and a half without too many sharp turns or having to go round and round too many times. It is a good thing, if possible, to vary the training ground. Horses get over-excited or fed-up, whichever way it takes them, when worked in the same field day after day.

Long slow work helps the muscles—for instance, cantering one and a half miles.

Short sharp work helps the wind. Canter as often as you like; but don't gallop more than once a week and never more than one and a half miles, a clean-winded horse seldom requiring more than one mile.

Fast work on bad or heavy going will break down the soundest horse sooner or later.

You may want to do the schooling and galloping yourself,

but you should, if possible, put up a light-weight, as legs must be saved from all unnecessary strain.

Horses will work best in company, the horse you are preparing being kept slightly behind the one you are working with.

A lot of hard strapping will help a horse's condition; and hand-rubbing and cold water applied to his legs is beneficial. Don't *gallop* him the day before the race except for a pipe-opener of one furlong or two (one-eighth of a mile).

Hard and fast rules are impossible to lay down as each horse requires a slightly different preparation as to the amount or little work he requires.

Your horse will probably go better shod with light shoes or aluminium racing plates; the hind shoes should have caulkins, but care should be taken to see that there are no sharp inside edges to cause a possible bad over-reach.

Now, you will need to be really fit yourself. Many races are lost entirely by the rider being unable to "ride" her horse for the last half-mile. Ordinary hunting is not sufficient in itself—you can play some hard squash rackets twice a week, or if that is not available, hard skipping and exercises (out of doors if possible, or else by an open window in a heavy jersey), working up to forty minutes a day the last week is an excellent preparation. Running is good, but the publicity is annoying. Of course, go to bed early, and cut out parties, cigarettes, and alcohol.

The Sunday afternoon before the Point-to-Point is a favourite time to go round the course. If for any reason you have no opportunity till the morning of the race, start in plenty of time, go by yourself or with an experienced performer, and walk every yard of the ground, leaving out the last fence for luck. Notice most particularly the best place to jump each fence, fix any special pitfalls carefully in your mind's eye, and know the twists and turns—especially any flags sticking out in the open which have to be rounded. You should know the course thoroughly, other people may go wrong—be sure you

won't. You will see what the going is like, where you may save your horse, where you can make up ground—perhaps by jumping a fence slightly obliquely, or by "putting on the pace" down-hill or on the soundest going.

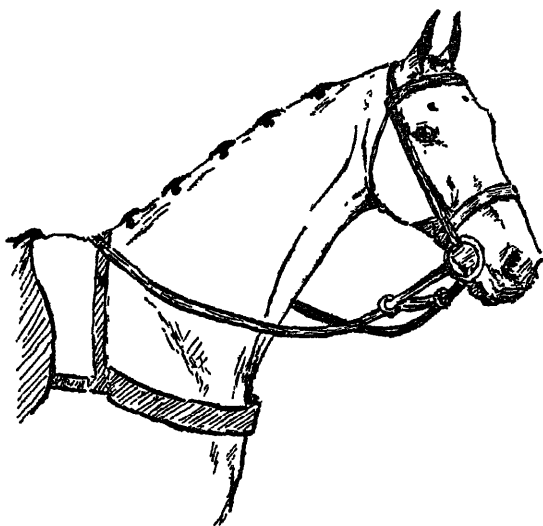
You should eat a good breakfast and not hurry over any of your arrangements. Think carefully of yourself and your comfort. If you are walking round the wet and muddy course you will want thick stockings and shoes; of course, your riding-boots and a change of stockings will be in your bag with your boot-hooks—don't expect to borrow things from other people. Remember that slipping reins have lost many races, so as well as relying on plaited or rubber reins, take a pair of woollen gloves in case the rain comes down in buckets.

Your good groom will be quite capable of looking after your horse without you fussing round. You will have made up your mind previously what bridle you are riding him in. Of course, in theory a snaffle is best for racing of any kind, but on some twisting courses or with some horses a double bridle will in practice suit most women much better for Point-to-Pointing. Martingales are considered dangerous racing in the event of a fall, so if you ride in a snaffle have "rings" on your reins, or for a double bridle what is called an "Irish martingale," which is a loop round all four reins.

Keep yourself warm and dry, and don't stand about talking to those sort of people who delight in reporting, "The course isn't fit to ride . . . the twelfth fence is a positive death-trap . . . it's terribly slippery. . . . So-and-so broke his neck at the thirteenth jump three years ago, and the fences are higher than ever . . ." and so on. This "spreading alarm among the troops" is noticeable on every Point-to-Point course, and probably most riders before a race have some small qualms of their own. Remember, if you are very frightened, that even the winner of many of the biggest steeplechases, including the Grand National, admits chattering teeth in the dressing-room! The odds on you having a bad fall are very, very remote; you know both yourself and the horse are fit—and you are riding entirely for fun. You may be riding astride or side-saddle.

The former gives the horse a better chance, as it is difficult to ride a good finish in a side-saddle. However, if you prefer the grip of the latter, and note with apprehension the horsey young women preparing to ride cross-saddle—remember that the most horsey of young women may tip out of the saddle if her horse makes a blunder—nor is the race always to the swift !

We hope it has been possible to convey your mount to the course by motor horse-box, or else that he has been walked on early and is resting quietly in some adjacent stable. One is always sorry for the horses obliged to thread in and out of



RACING "RINGS" AND BREAST PLATE

the noisy, smelling cars on the road to the races, whose drivers are oft-times inconsiderate of the nerves of the highly-strung principals giving the show.

Feed your horse as early as possible,—no hay, and a few swallows of water—perhaps a half-feed five hours before the race. You will see him saddled in plenty of time—remember that overtight bandages or girths stop a horse very badly. Your saddle must not be able to slip. Broken girths and leathers have lost many races. You must be sure that all your saddlery is absolutely sound and properly put on. Your horse will be quietly walking round, kept warm and dry by a rug or

sheet, according to the weather, and possibly by an ear-cap or hood if the wind is as bitter as it can be in March or April at times. Weigh out in good time and be sure your weights are right.

You will, of course, have made all your arrangements about how to dispose of any extra weight. It is much better to carry it in the shape of a comfortable saddle and in heavier clothes rather than as dead weight. If you are obliged to carry lead, be quite sure that it will not have a chance of being jumped out of your weight-cloth—a mortifying disaster which has also all the appearance of dishonesty!

"They're off!" At last, and our horse feeling strong. The first fence towers directly ahead—you will have decided where you mean to jump it, but other things may intervene, other riders, or your horse may be pulling hard. It's nice to jump the first fence with a certainty that your horse will not refuse. Galloping horses and the wind of your going—a grand hunt without a check or a strand of wire! There are sure to be one or two women who cannot hold their horses, and one or more inclined to let her horse jump crooked and apt to push you out. Keep clear of them all you can. Ride as if hounds were running in the next field and you meant to keep top of the hunt.

If your horse is going easily you may go to the front—it fusses a good horse to be kept back and tires the rider; you can wait there just as easily as behind.

Whatever you do, don't get tailed off—you cannot afford to give away distance with the average hunter.

With your well-schooled, confident, fit horse you can afford to make the pace at the last dozen fences. You may frighten off your worst rivals—nothing is more upsetting than to see another horse making ground at every fence. Don't jostle or do anything unfairly—if only for the reason that it will all come back on you next time.

Should you yourself lose ground for any cause, or your horse make a mistake, don't hustle him into the position he has lost, but get him going again gradually—from the rear

you may be able to cut a corner or take better advantage of the down-hill. You must be prepared to ride fast into the last few fences—it is there that races can be pulled out of the fire. If your horse is fit and a stayer he will answer the call—if he isn't, the whip won't help and possibly hinder. Ride your very best now, but if you can't get a place don't ask for the last ounce—the gallop will have done your horse good, and you can ride him fresh and none the worse in another race next week.

Should you fall, roll out of the way if you can, but if in the middle of the course be still and tuck in your head till the other horses have passed. They won't touch you if they possibly can avoid you, and you know driving a car how difficult it is to avoid the pedestrian who dodges about in front!

If you think you are winning easily, still keep your horse going—someone may come up and pass you. If the crowd is cheering hard it generally means that someone is overhauling you fast. The crowd much prefers “a close finish with the favourite winning by a neck” to any runaway victories.

You can't expect to win your first Point-to-Point without considerable practice. After all, the old tradition of “the ride” across country is the main thing and silver cups a modern intervention in a sporting contest.

But if you do come in “placed” or even fourth don't dismount before told to do so.

HUNTER TRIALS

Hunter Trials are increasingly popular among hunting folk as partaking a little of the competitive excitement of a Point-to-Point with none of its dangers, while offering an opportunity for the genuine hunter to compete on level terms and probably beat:

(1) The *show*-horse hunter; (2) the *race*-horse hunter.

Therefore among owners of suitable horses Hunter Trials are popular and provide an amusing day for the competitors and

often for the onlookers, but, of course, as a popular draw they do not approach either Show Jumping, where horses are leapt over incredibly high and most artificial obstacles, or Point-to-Pointing, where no doubt the "bit on" is an additional excitement.

From the spectators' point of view Hunter Trials take too long, and as a rule it is difficult to see the whole course and more difficult still to find out the marks won or lost by each competitor. From the rider's point of view, it is found that his or her ride is too soon over—even if completed!

The course is generally about one mile to one and a quarter miles round, comprising some dozen obstacles, genuinely fair hunting things, probably with several twists and turns, and maybe a gate to open. There is sure to be a gate to jump, some timber, an "in and out," a ditch to you and away from you, possibly a wall, and if the committee are out to give the onlookers some fun—a piece of open water.

Competitors ride singly or in pairs as directed by the judges.

Marks are awarded by different methods—sometimes it is seventy per cent jumping and thirty per cent for appearance in the ring—sometimes it is for jumping only.

Judges, of course, all differ in their ideas of judging a Hunter Trial. Sometimes they sit together in a "crow's nest," sometimes there is one at every obstacle, other times the judges ride on the inner side of the circle. Consequently the rider is not quite sure what to go for, and the best thing is to give as good a display as you personally know how, and not take the competition too seriously.

A good bold jumper is essential for a chance of success. He needs to be hunting fit and "on his toes"—two or three days' rest previously with walking exercise only should make a genuine hunter feel well and keen. The old horse will generally jump a course better than a young one who is inclined to be put off by the flags and the people. It is well to enter in all the classes for which you are eligible, in case a second run will give you a better chance.

One should try a hunter one proposes to jump at a Hunter

Trial by taking him out hacking and popping him over various obstacles—beginning by something quite small and working up to a fair-sized piece of timber with a good ditch.

Don't sicken him by jumping the same thing too often, and he will go better with another horse.

On the day be there in time to look round the course, and carefully read the instructions and remarks as to award of the marks.

You may be asked to jump in company or alone.

Keep your horse on the move—some stewards insist on horses being in the ring all the time their class is being jumped off—which may take an hour or more. It will pay you to keep your horse warm with a rug thrown over his saddle, or to keep trotting him about. Don't let him get bored or go to sleep, and keep quiet and cool yourself.

If you are put to ride with a complete stranger arrange which side of the course you will each keep, and you yourself should look out for a refusal interfering with your own horse.

Ride as if hounds were in the next field and don't be afraid of going a bit faster than usual. Of course you mustn't race, go steady with your companion between obstacles, but it is quite fair to quicken a bit at each fence.

If you tie you may have to jump the course a second time.

Handy Hunter Classes at the local horse show are an attempt to give a genuine good hunter, whatever his appearance, a chance to win in the ring. Generally the course includes a gate to open, bars to take down and put up, imitation wire to be jumped, perhaps walking down some steps, as well as the usual nice small obstacles. Manners and handiness account for a great deal in doing a good round.

CHAPTER XI

THE CHOICE OF A HUNTING COUNTRY AND THE LIFE THEREIN

"The life of no man that useth gentle game and disport be less displeasable unto God than the life of a perfect and skilful hunter or of whom more good cometh. The first reason is that hunting causeth men to eschew the seven deadly sins. Secondly, men are better when riding, more just and more understanding, more alert and more at ease, more undertaking . . . in short and long all good customs and manners cometh thereof and the health of man and of his soul."

(EDWARD, 2ND DUKE OF YORK (1410), *Master of Game*.)

IT is not easy to give advice about the choice of a country to hunt in without knowing individual requirements, experience, money available, and so on. And in the same way it is impossible to suggest the definite costs of a season's hunting, conditions altering so much from year to year—with the cost of hay, subscriptions, and even wages, rents, and rates varying from seasonal causes and also according to the "fashionability" or otherwise of a country, owing perhaps to a new huntsman or a change of mastership.¹ It is, however, fairly safe to say that at the present time (1932) hunters can be kept more cheaply than they have been since 1914, but that as a general rule subscriptions have risen owing to the high contingent expenses in a hunting country, wire, poultry fund, rates, cost of renting coverts, etc. As a rough guide one could probably now estimate the keep of a small stud in Leicestershire, or any crack country, at round about £110 per horse a season, to include keep, wages, rent, and taxes of stables. The larger the stud, provided that the stud-groom is honest as well as economical, and with ordinary luck, the expenses should tend to fall per horse—as, for instance, four men can easily do

¹ In 1917 seed hay cost £16 a ton, owing to the War; in 1932 £3 10s. od., owing to the "economic blizzard"!



Photo Poole, Waterford

POINT-TO-POINT RACING

"First over the last fence" (Miss D. Musgrave, riding side-saddle, winning a Ladies' Race in Ireland, 1930)



Photo Sport & General

"Falling at the last fence after leading all the way after which the lady remounted and secured a place" (Vine Hunt Point-to-Point, 1931)



Mrs Silvia Masters winning at the Tipperary Point-to-Point Races (1931) She is one of the best women astride, equally good to hounds as riding a race



Photo W D Moss

Lady Apsley jumping fence and ditch with drop at the Cotswold Hunter Trials (1930), showing how a horse should spread itself, given a free head.

nine or even ten horses while two men cannot do five horses properly and riding "second horse," etc. (See Appendix I.)

It is always more economical to take stables in a good hunting centre as horses come out again oftener; for example, Melton is one of the best centres for hunting in Leicestershire, and horses stabled there can be hunted two days a week, which they could not possibly do from the outside of the country.

As a rule it is cheaper to hunt with one pack than with two, but sometimes Hunts are very good to regular subscribing neighbours. All fashionable Hunts charge visitors in self-defence, if not on any other grounds! The "cap" may be £2 to £4 (or in some provincial countries it may be £1); one should always find out and hand the required sum over to the Secretary. If you propose to hunt regularly all season in a strange country you should first write to the Secretary for particulars of subscriptions. You may be expected to pay anything from £10 to £25 a horse, or you may be asked for a minimum sum according to the days a week you propose to hunt.

In some of the smaller hunting countries of England, Wales, and Ireland one can enjoy a lot of hunting at less than half the cost in a fashionable country. Ponies and cobs can probably be kept quite well for about £40 each per annum. And here we would advise the novice that more fun and sport can be got in a so-called "bad country," where there is a good pack of hounds (bred for and able to hunt and kill foxes) than in a "swish" country at a time there happens to be (temporarily we hope) a bad pack of hounds that cannot hunt, a bad huntsman, or an unpopular Master.

The novice who wants to see sport yet cannot afford to spend much money, should choose first a country where there is a good hunting pack of hounds (regardless of name), then one that has plenty of foxes—which means with plenty of good sporting landowners and farmers. Nothing is worse for a stranger out to hunt than traipsing about from covert to covert behind a dejected pack of hounds and a huntsman making

pathetic attempts to keep up his and their spirits in face of "shooting arrangements," "warnings off," "saw a fox here last month," etc. Plenty of litters in the country is the backbone of first-rate sport. Granted a country with a good pack of hounds, and a fair number of foxes, the novice who is out to see the sport of hunting can enjoy herself on what is sometimes an absurdly small expenditure. In these "unfashionable" countries everything will cost her less—subscriptions, clothes, rents, etc., and a much cheaper type of horse will do, and whoever she is, so long as she appears ready to abide by the ordinary rules of the hunting-field, she will be sure of a welcome.

There is a peculiar charm in hunting from your own home, and many good hunting people go so far as to say, "If you can't hunt from home it isn't worth hunting at all." But be that as it may, to hunt away requires a longer pocket.

For experience, sake you should certainly strain some time in your life to get one full season with either Quorn, Fernie, Pytchley, Cottesmore, Belvoir, or Warwickshire, and occasional days with each, for until you have at least sampled the intoxication of a fast thing across acres and acres of perfect grass, and galloped over the great black fences with clean-dug ditches, you have not experienced one of the best thrills in hunting. But, and this is important, you will not have much pleasure therein unless either you are a super-horseman or you are able to ride big, bold, galloping horses, and have also plenty of them (which is expensive!). On the other hand, remember that unless you are exceptionally gifted these sort of Leicestershire horses are no pleasure to ride, their first season anyhow, in a cramped country, and conversely that an excellent jumping cob or pony will seldom be of much use in a grass country. Therefore, unless money is of no particular object, the novice is counselled to choose for the first few seasons' hunting one of the least fashionable countries in England or Wales, where she will not need much outlay to enjoy herself enormously, or better still take up her residence for a year or two in Ireland, where these advantages can be had plus some

of the best sport in the world, a fascinating country, delightful people to hunt with, and more jumping to the acre with less wire than anywhere in England.

Heavy-weight people looking for somewhere to hunt should avoid either a very hilly country or one where the going is exceptionally deep. Start hunting early in the season—there is nothing like cub-hunting to teach one the country and the line foxes take.

One of the chief charms of fox-hunting is its intimate connection with the country-side, and the people who snatch odd days here and there miss this charm, and with it a large part of what hunting means. To those who really love hunting, it means a great deal more than careering over obstacles or chattering to friends, however delightful both may be. We set out to show, in Chapter I, how the traditions handed down over a thousand years exist in modern fox-hunting, not only in hunting terms, customs, and ideals of sport, but also in the mentality of the true hunting man or woman (otherwise a handicap course over fences would be a better means of meeting friends in an amusing jumping contest). The old Grand Veneurs were naturalists and woodcraftsmen who regarded knowledge of the habits of the quarry as important as the merits of their hounds; they loved the deer they hunted as they loved good hounds, and they took pride in the technique of sport. To-day anyone who can sit on a horse over a couple of fences is apt to claim the proud title of a hunting man or woman. But though ideas have changed with the spirit of the times, losing the old ideals of apprenticeship, of the *winning* of "spurs," and of the dignity of experience, yet hunting people of the right sort cling tenaciously to much that would have died out were it not for the hunting tradition and its devotees. To take one example, the wearing of formal clothes for anything but the most ceremonious of functions has gone—but the red coat is worn with zest by the sloppiest young man and few of the Brightest Young Things would venture out hunting in anything quite original!

The old traditions of "Venerie" have of later generations

to a large extent been adapted to a love of the English country-side, and though not generally acknowledged, hunting has done more than anything else "to preserve the amenities of the English country-side" voluntarily, unselfishly, and in the best interests of the State. Land has been improved, farmers helped, houses saved, woodlands preserved—not for selfish reasons of the moment but for "the future." It is impossible to estimate in terms of hard cash as hunting involves in direct and indirect ways so many interests, from the "turnovers" of small country tradesmen to the farmer who adds a "young 'un" to untaxed profits, from the blacksmith saved from extinction in an age of tractors, to the expert saddler so much better off than his unemployed brother craftsman in the boot trade, swamped by the lower standard of foreign workers. Hunting people use British-made articles, employ British labour, and encourage an exclusively British industry. One way and another possibly £10,000,000 is turned over in connection with hunting every year, and it certainly would not be too much to suggest £2,000,000 of it as direct wages. Without hunting it is likely that the last remaining landed estates would pass away, including many attractive amenities for the general public, and with them much valuable voluntary service. Moreover, were it not for hunting hardly any people who could afford to go abroad would stay in the British Isles all the winter. Naturally their money would go too, and English politicians must always remember this when dealing with anti-sport deputations of the "long-haired brigade" (so many of whom take their own holidays abroad!).

Anyhow, having decided to settle in one particular district for hunting, the new-comer will find certain duties expected of her, and she who values a good name would be wise not to shirk her responsibilities in this direction, however "tiresome" at times they may seem to be. Someone who just "takes a house" misses entirely what a home in an English country-side means. The new home may be large or small, or medium-sized, but it is sure to have a place in the life of the village, which its occupant and family will be expected to share.

There is no compulsion, everyone is independent, but of a surety the new owner of "the Manor," "the House," or "the Court," with its neat row of horse-boxes and its weathercock of a running fox, will be expected with the unbreakable bonds of country tradition to play its part in the village life. So long as the sum-total in voluntary service balances the right to ride over public and private property there is unlikely to be any successful agitation to abolish hunting, and hunting people should bear this in mind. Not only is service rendered in cash terms but in other and more valuable ways. For instance, the County Council, the District Council, the Bench, the local Village, and its many organizations, Flower Shows, Agricultural Shows, Politics, Women's Institutes, Farmers' Unions, the Scouts and Guides, and the Parish Church, with its works and requirements—all these need personal assistance which hunting people must gladly proffer. Moreover, one should be ready to assist the other social amenities, sports, and pastimes of those on whose goodwill so much of our sport depends, the local football and cricket, Working Men's Clubs, thrift organizations, and so forth. And indeed the hunting lady who takes no part in the life of the country-side and fails to know the real country people and their lives, their troubles, difficulties, and their joys and recreations, misses a great deal. The time spent in a draughty hall lit by one smoky lamp, slowly discussing the arrangements for the Summer Flower Show on a winter's evening after a tiring day's hunting is not wasted, and in many unexpected ways returns a hundredfold in new friends, fresh usefulness, and sometimes granted a sense of humour, a new story—moreover, it will do your figure good to miss your dinner now and again!

Before leaving this subject of "duties" for the hunting woman we would point out one or two spheres of usefulness rather nearer to the theme of this book—viz. the dangers that beset hunting to-day.

(1) WIRE. There is no need to more than mention this serious peril which affects all hunting people. Most big Hunts have developed a Wire Fund in conjunction with their

organization for assessing damage, and it behoves all hunting people to back it up all they can either by voluntary service, funds, or influence. Here again there is nothing like the personal touch, getting to know all the farmers and their wives in a particular district personally, and in some cases the struggling non-hunting landlord who, despairing of selling his estate, is inclined to let things slide and economize (falsely) on the repair bill. A personal visit requesting as a particular favour for a certain fence to be laid, or ditch dug out, or gate mended, or a length of wire removed, often works wonders, particularly if the Hunt representative is sympathetic, charming, and efficient.

(2) SHOOTING TENANTS are perhaps the most difficult people to deal with from a hunting point of view—tact and sympathy are necessary in convincing some of them that cub-hunting will teach pheasants to fly! Getting to know the keepers well and keeping a motherly eye on the litters in a "doubtful" district will be rewarded by a sure find and the appreciation of the Master. Some keepers know nothing about fox-hunting, and are under the impression that foxes live on fat pheasants all the year round—and their employers believe every word—what such keepers would do without foxes to blame for shortcomings in the bag one cannot contemplate! There are bad foxes like bad everything else, to whom partridges, pheasants, and turkeys are more delectable than rabbits, rats, and mice—then the best thing is to get the hounds to come quickly or persuade the injured parties to walk a couple of hound puppies!

(3) WALKING PUPPIES. This is the delightful duty of all keen hunting people, and there are few greater pleasures than seeing your charges grow up straight, strong, healthy fox-catchers. You must give them dry sleeping quarters, as much freedom as possible all day, regular exercise as they grow older, and feed them on nourishing food, starting with skim milk or broth and puppy biscuit, working up to scraps, dry brown bread, boiled sheep's head, liver, porridge. A spoonful of cod liver oil every day is good, and sulphur is

excellent once a week (inside and out), and plenty of good meaty bones.

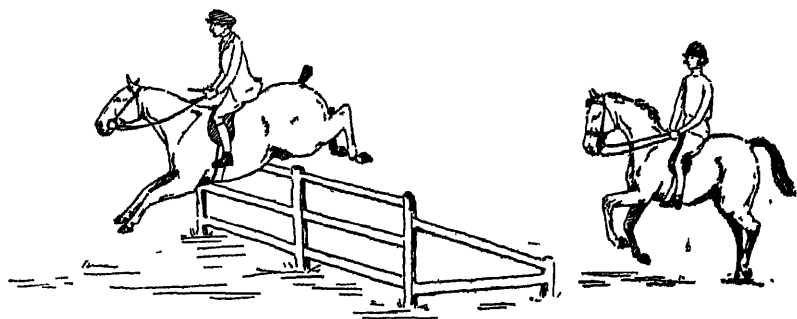
Some Hunts have no difficulty in getting "walks"—others are most grateful and appreciate an offer to walk a puppy. Two are less trouble than one as they amuse each other! Good walks are the backbone of a good pack of hounds. There are few prouder moments than seeing Lilian, whom you sat up to nurse through distemper three nights running, and paid compensation for the pair of pants she removed off the irate washerwoman's line, now leading the pack. There are few better ways of making friends with the Master and the huntsman than by giving a puppy a good "walk" and not sending him back to Kennels too early.

(4) CARS. Out hunting in some fashionable countries cars have become a serious problem. These iron horses stay out all day and are seldom under any kind of restraint, the result being that the occupants anticipate the lines a fox will take, get in front of hounds, head foxes, and do everything to make themselves unpopular by turning a moderate day into a bad one. When hounds really run most of the cars are never seen again. Hunting people must restrain their families and friends from spoiling sport in this way. Of course, a time comes that people cannot ride to hounds ever again, and to pursue on wheels is the only way to see hounds. If you drive your car to see a hunt you will probably do no harm—it is by driving a car in order "to see a fox" and "holler at him" that so many thoughtless and ignorant non-subscribing motorists make themselves unpopular. As said elsewhere, hunting people should not allow their empty cars to follow hounds at any time nor come too close to a crowded Meet.

(5) SLIPPERY ROADS. In some districts this is one of the most serious menaces to riding and hunting, as well as affecting farmers and small tradespeople. The only way to attack the evil, which is largely due to carelessness and lack of appreciation by officials, is to organize a protest on behalf of the ratepayers and road users in a district. There are ways of preventing roads becoming dangerously slippery, many small

lanes ought not to be tarred at all, grass verges on roadsides should be left free for horses, etc. It is unfair that the King's Highway should be rendered unsafe for sections of the community varying from the richer people who provide the greater portion of the rates (not forgetting their grooms, who have to exercise the horses) to the small men with their ponies and traps. It is no use grumbling; the best thing to do is to take up the matter in every affected neighbourhood through the District Council and the County Council, and keep hammering away at the bodies concerned till something is done!

(6) Of late years a movement has sprung up which is of great value to hunting and riding, the "*Institute of the Horse*" (27 Cavendish Square, London), which all keen hunting people should join, paying one guinea a year, as it aims at pooling knowledge and experience to keep the "culte" of the horse safe for this generation. Its Junior Branch, the "Pony Club," is consolidating the work for the future by encouraging young people to ride and enjoy all kinds of sport connected with horses and riding, to instil in them the proper care of their



animals, and to offer them the opportunity of receiving instruction of a higher class and on more orthodox lines than many of them can obtain individually. Local Pony Clubs should be supported in every way and farmers' children encouraged to join.

Lastly we must appreciate how hunting teaches one one's own country-side in a way that nothing else does. Except for hunting, what chances might one have to ride in private parks

and woodlands, what incentive to get up before sunrise in September or to stay out till the moon rises in December? Dashing along the main roads in motor-cars does not teach one the real country-side. The country is the little by-roads, the lanes, the farm tracks, the hill-tops, the commons, and the green fields well away from the roads and haunts of men. Here one still finds all that meant England in the Past, and with the eyes and hearts of the Grand Veneurs of old we learn to love the Chase, not only for its thrills and its "great runs," but for its quiet beauties of colour, light, and form, its changing seasons, its smells, its sounds, its grey days, and its nature by hedgerow, field, and woodland. Except for hunting, would one shiver among the bare oaks to watch the red varmint over the ride while a cock pheasant crows apprehensively on his way to bed; except for hunting, would one appreciate the mud collected in the course of "a day in the Vale," and one does not sally out in vile weather for any other pleasure—yet these days are health-giving, and some of them have the happiest memories.

In coming to a new home in the country one must consider always the oldness of things in the village. To-day often a lot of medieval history remains for us to see. The Well, the Church, and the Market Cross are there, but their importance has been largely transferred to "the Post Office," where modern pensions and stamps are handed out to a dependent generation and "the Shop," where so much of the necessities of life made by foreign labour are purchased by the descendants of the old craftsmen whose names still flourish in the village—the Saddlers, Baileys, Bakers, Hoopers, Dyers, Weavers, Wrights, Potters, and Goddards (goat-herds). There are still Carters, Farmers, Smiths, Shepherds, Gardeners, Thatchers, Barbers, Waterman, Bakers, Hunters, Parsons, Brewers, Butchers, and Masons in our village, as well as Red-heads, Ruddyman, Little, Butt, Barrel, Shark, Short, Pott, Whitehead, Tipler, Muckraker, and Bottle—characteristic of country wit even to-day! We may find the church almost unchanged, save by a Victorian Gothic vestry, and village feet

have trod that threshold every Sunday for six hundred years ; and the font, where every village child from the Squire's to the child of love has been baptised, stands where it was put by the Saxons. Maybe that a petrol pump flaunts outside the smithy, and that the Squire's acres have shrunk as has the Common at the back of the village, but the Green remains as always the children's playground, its grass cherished down the centuries till, in 1920, the War Memorial was erected on the Green on the side of an older cross knocked down by Cromwell's men and close to where a Roman milestone was dug up a few years ago. Rival inns glare at each other across the street as they have for many generations, on one side the more respectable "Goat and Compasses" (or rather, as it was intended, "God encompasseth us") and that frequented by the less self-righteous but more hilarious "Ring of Bells," where Charles II is said to have stopped for a drink on his way back from hunting !

It is pleasant still to ride through the village past the Old Well, where children are playing "Blind Man's Buff" as it has been played back down the ages by all English children to the tune possibly of "Old King Cole who was a merry old Soul." We pass the Pond where spiteful gossips were ducked instead of being sued for libel, which must have been so much more satisfactory and less expensive to the injured party ; the "Pound" where stray beasts were impounded till claimed for a fee by their owners still stands at the bottom of the street. The "Stocks" have gone, but it is possible that the long stone outside may be where disturbers of the village peace sat to consider overday the ribaldry of overnight ! Beyond the land rises sharply, and in low lights we can see the "lynchets" where prehistoric Englishmen tilled the first fields. High up on the ridge of the downs, grassy knolls and banks mark the "hut circles," "camps," and "barrows," where long-headed Britons strove against men with bronze and iron implements. Words and names around us bear witness to the Angles, Saxons, Danes, and Northmen, former occupants of dingle, hollow, barrow, steading, holt, wick, tun, bury, chase,

and park. Field-names such as "Starveall," "Much Without," "Lord's Acre," "Old Bury," "Holyrood," "Kingsbourne," tell the story of the country-side. Here we are on a strip of Roman road locally still called "The Street," over there is the "Whiteway," by which the supply of salt was brought from the sea by pack-horses, meaning the difference between enough and starvation to a village depending on salted meat for its winter keep. There are few big woods in a hunting country which do not show signs of an ancient origin, when so much of England consisted of impenetrable forest and marsh; there are few rivers and streams which do not show their influence dating from the time when river crossings were dangerous enough to sharply divide the people and thoughts of the district. Church spires and towers speckle the English landscape to a degree surprising to a foreigner, but before the times of good local roads three miles was a long enough walk on Sundays.

Here we may pass a cock-pheasant and remember that the Romans introduced them to England long before the Mongolian bird, with his white collar and less adventurous habits, was bred to make a shooter's holiday. A strong smell of garlic by that woody slope rightly implies the Roman villa so lately discovered by archeologists, as does the patch of wild lilies of the valley and crab-apple trees—possibly planted by some Roman gentleman with seed from his sunny Italy. The English turf covers many mysteries—battlefields, peel-towers, castle ruins, and places where no villager would venture at night. Dark deeds have been done which men have grieved over on their death-bed, possibly accounting for the broad acres bequeathed by successive generations to the Church. The lord of the manor had rights but he also had his duties; a good lord was loved and respected: a bad one was ill served—and it is the same yet.

Hark! a bell is tolling in the Vale below—the Squire is going to his rest. A long procession winds the lane from the mansion to the vault in the little church on the hill-side, where men and women of his line have been laid before him

for many generations, including Sir Richard, a patron of Shakespeare and friend of Sir Philip Sidney—whose effigy we see and that of his wife carved life-size on the big stone tomb, a curly-coated dog at his feet and fourteen children in stiff ruffs kneeling round the sides. The little procession winds along—a very simple last journey for one so rich in service to his country and his times; a plain oak coffin covers a great Pro-Consul content to rest in the little churchyard surrounded by the graves of his village he had cared for well, in view of the country-side he had loved and to which he remained faithful in the luxuries of Eastern magnificence or the pomp of a great foreign embassy. Riding to hounds as a boy had shaped his outlook, as a grown man had refreshed his spirit, and as a wise counsellor had warmed his heart till the end, when the Hunt-servants, close behind the bier, make the only touch of the colour he had loved so well. In the little church the sunlight streams through the old family coat of arms in the stained-glass window, three harts proper gules, on to a big wreath of red roses inscribed "Home is the hunter home from the hill, and the fisherman home from the sea." Sadly heads shake, "is said that we shall never more see his like again . . . but the Old Earl's daughter is the very spit of her sire, and will keep on the hounds!"

And thus it has been since the Beginning and Diana ran with her hounds.

"Always our fathers were hunters, lords of the pitiless spear,
Chasing in English woodlands the wild white ox and deer,
Feeling the edge of their knife-blades, trying the pull of their bows,
At a sudden foot in the forest thrilling to '*Yonder he goes!*'"

"Not for the lust of killing, not for the places of pride,
Not for the hate of the hunted we English saddle and ride,
But because in the gift of our fathers the blood in our veins that flows
Must answer for ever and ever the challenge of '*Yonder he goes!*'"

(WILL OGILVIE, 1923.)

APPENDIX I

COST in round figures of year's hunting for a couple with hunting days averaging rather more than four days a week each, and in a crack country, from the middle of September, 1929, to end of April, 1930. Horses up from middle of July to middle of May. Nine horses and one pony, including one kept after end of January for Point-to-Points.

	£
Wages, 2 permanent men and 2 temporary strappers	370
Clothes for 2 men and 2 temporary strappers	15
Rent of stables and 2 cottages	40
Rates and water rates	16
Oats (39s. to 40s. a qr.)	100
Straw (£3 10s. od. per ton)	30
Hay (at £7 to £8 a ton)	195
Bran and linseed	30
Shoeing	60
Vet	16
Chemist	18
Saddler (repairs, etc.)	36
Motor horse box and part wages, 6 months (2000 miles)	150
Summering 2 fields and hay, etc.	25
	£1101

NOTE.—That a Point-to-Point horse certainly costs more than a hunter to keep.

That accidents are likely to happen (in the above case two horses being laid up—one for three weeks and the other twice for ten days) and must be allowed for.

The motor horse-box was only used for Meets 6 miles or more away from home.

No allowance is made for increase or decrease of capital value, or for the renewal of expensive items like new saddles, rugs, stable furniture, etc.

Each rider had about 130 days hunting.

Hunt subscriptions and "caps," £200.

A good horsemaster can reduce expenditure enormously. The current price of hay, straw, and oats varies so much between one season and another, for instance, in 1926-27 seed hay was £12 a ton, in 1929-30 £7 10s., in 1931-32 £4.

APPENDIX II

LONDON SHOPS RECOMMENDED FOR WOMEN'S HUNTING
AND RIDING REQUISITES

SIDE-SADDLES :

Messrs. Champion and Wilton, 457 Oxford St., W.1.

Messrs. Owen and Son, 62 Duke St., W.1.

Messrs. Whippy and Steggall, 30 North Audley St., W.1.

ASTRIDE SADDLES :

Messrs. J. I. Souter and Co., 5 Warwick St., W.1.

Messrs. Whippy and Steggall, 30 North Audley St., W.1.

HABITS AND ASTRIDE COATS :

Messrs. Busvine, Ltd., 4 Brook St., W.1.

Messrs. Roberts and Carroll, 9 Cork St., W.1.

Messrs. Williams and Cleaver, 10 Clifford St., W.1.

ASTRIDE BREECHES :

Messrs. Thomas and Sons, Carlos Place, W.1.

Messrs. Tautz, 12 Grafton St., W.1.

BOOTS :

Messrs. Flack and Smith, 30 Davies St.

Messrs. Faulkner, South Molton St., W.1.

Messrs. Maxwell, 9 Dover St., W.1.

HATS (SILK HATS AND BOWLERS) :

Messrs. Lock and Son, 6 St. James St., S.W.1.

Mrs. White, 73 Jermyn St., S.W.1.

HATS (SOFT) :

Messrs. Robert Heath (and most men's hatters), 37 Knightsbridge, S.W.1.

VEILS :

Messrs. R. Sands, 187a Sloane St., S.W.1.

SHIRTS, TIES, AND GLOVES :

Messrs. S. Gilbert, 194 Sloane St., S.W.1.

SHIRTS (JERSEY) :

Messrs. Izod, 49 Conduit St., W.1

WHIPS, ETC. :

Messrs. Swaine and Adeney, 185 Piccadilly, S.W.1.

Messrs. Briggs and Son, 23 St. James St., S.W.1.

HUNTING MAPS :

The Map House, St. James St., S.W.1.

There are, of course, most excellent shops in most of the smaller towns in hunting countries where one can get habits, boots, saddlery, etc., made for one quite as good as anything in London, but it would not be possible to give a full list, and it is not very fair to mention only a few. All the above London firms can be trusted to give a novice every attention and reliable advice.

Excellent hunting equipment of all sorts can be obtained new and second-hand from Messrs. Moss Bros., Covent Garden, W.C.

APPENDIX III

LIST OF READABLE BOOKS ON RIDING AND HUNTING
PRACTICE : OF INTEREST TO THE YOUNG HORSEWOMAN

ON RIDING :

Horse Sense and Horsemanship. Lt.-Col. Geoffrey Brooke, D.S.O.

PRACTICAL HORSE LORE :

School for Horse and Rider. Capt. Hance.

Bridlewise. Lt.-Col. Sydney Goldschmidt.

BREAKING, TRAINING, ETC. :

The Way of a Man with a Horse. Lt.-Col. G. Brooke (Lonsdale Library).

ON SHOWING, RACING, ETC. :

In My Opinion. Major W. E. Lyon.

STABLE KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICAL THEORY, AND SIMPLE VETERINARY
SCIENCE :

Horses and Stables. Sir F. Fitzwygram.

Stable Management and Exercise. Capt. Haynes.

Notes for Hunting Men. Capt. C. G. Makenzie.

RIDING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE :

Riding. By Cecil Aldin and Lady Hunloke.

ON HUNTING :

Hunting. Badminton Library.

Hunting. Lonsdale Library.

Ratcatcher to Scarlet. Cecil Aldin.

Pink and Scarlet. General Alderson.

THE SCIENCE OF HUNTING :

Hunting the Fox. Late Lord Willoughby de Broke, M.F.H.

Foxiana. Mr. Isaac Bell, M.F.H.

Thoughts on Hunting. Peter Beckford.

The Breeding of Foxhounds. Earl Bathurst, M.F.H.

MAGAZINES :

The Field.

Horse and Hound.

Country Life.

Polo Magazine (of New York).

The Spur (of New York).

The Horse Quarterly.

The Cavalry Magazine.

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